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Author's Autograph Edition

LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

BY WASHINGTON IRVING

Volume IV.

NEW YORK & LONDON G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS 1896

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Life of
George Washington

AUTHOR'S AUTOGRAPH EDITION

Contents.

PAGE

CHAP. I.—Treatment of the Hessian Prisoners—Their Interviews with Washington — Their Reception by the People. 1

CHAP. II. — Episode — Colonel Griffin in the Jerseys — Donop Decoyed — Inroad of Cadwalader and Reed—Retreat and Confusion of the Enemy's Outposts — Washington Recrosses the Delaware with his Troops—The Game Reversed—The Hessians Hunted Back through the Country — Washington Made Military Dictator 6

CHAP. III.—Howe Hears of the Affair at Trenton — Cornwallis Sent Back to the Jerseys — Reconnoitering Expedition of Reed—His Exploits — Washington in Peril at Trenton — Reinforced by Troops under Cadwalader and Mifflin—Position of his Men—Cornwallis at Trenton — Repulsed at the Assunpink — The American Camp Menaced—Night March of Washington—Affair at Princeton—Death of Mercer—Rout of British Troops—Pursued by Washington — Cornwallis at Princeton —

PAGE

Baffled and Perplexed—Washington at Morristown—His System of Annoyance—The Tables Turned upon the Enemy. 15

CHAP. IV. — Burke on the State of Affairs in America — New Jersey Roused to Arms — Washington Grants Safe Conduct to Hessian Convoys — Encampment at Morristown — Putnam at Princeton—His Stratagem to Conceal the Weakness of his Camp—Exploit of General Dickinson near Somerset Court-House—Washington's Counter Proclamation —Prevalence of the Small-Pox—Inoculation of the Army—Contrast of the British and American Commanders and their Camps . 40

CHAP. V.—Negotiations for Exchange of Prisoners—Case of Colonel Ethan Allen — Of General Lee — Correspondence of Washington with Sir William Howe about the Exchanges of Prisoners — Referees Appointed —Letters of Lee from New York—Case of Colonel Campbell—Washington's Advice to Congress on the Subject of Retaliation—His Correspondence with Lord Howe about the Treatment of Prisoners—The Horrors of the Jersey Prison-Ship and the Sugar House. . 53

CHAP. VI.—Exertions to Form a New Army—Calls on the Different States—Insufficiency of the Militia—Washington's Care for the Yeomanry—Dangers in the Northern Department —Winter Attack on Ticonderoga Apprehended—Exertions to Reinforce Schuyler—

PAGE

Precarious State of Washington's Army — Conjectures as to the Designs of the Enemy —Expedition of the British against Peekskill. 71

CHAP. VII.—Schuyler's Affairs in the Northern Department — Misunderstandings with Congress—Gives Offense by a Reproachful Letter —Office of Adjutant-General Offered to Gates —Declined by him—Schuyler Reprimanded by Congress for his Reproachful Letter — Gates Appointed to the Command at Ticonderoga—Schuyler Considers Himself Virtually Suspended—Takes his Seat as a Delegate to Congress, and Claims a Court of Inquiry—Has Command at Philadelphia. 80

CHAP. VIII. — Foreign Officers Candidates for Situations in the Army—Difficulties in Adjusting Questions of Rank—Ducoudray — Conway — Kosciuszko — Washington's Guards — Arnold Omitted in the Army Promotions — Washington Takes his Part—British Expeditions against Danbury—Destruction of American Stores—Connecticut Yeomanry in Arms —Skirmish at Ridgefield—Death of General Wooster — Gallant Services of Arnold — Rewarded by Congress — Exploit of Colonel Meigs at Sag Harbor. 92

CHAP. IX.—Schuyler on the Point of Resigning —Committee of Inquiry Report in his Favor —His Memorial to Congress Proves Satisfactory — Discussions Regarding the Northern Department—Gates Mistaken as to his Posi-

PAGE

tion—He Prompts his Friends in Congress—His Petulant Letter to Washington—Dignified Reply of the Latter—Position of Gates Defined—Schuyler Reinstated in Command of the Department—Gates Appears on the Floor of Congress—His Proceedings There . 111

CHAP. X.—The Highland Passes of the Hudson—George Clinton in Command of the Forts—His Measures for Defense—Generals Greene and Knox Examine the State of the Forts—Their Report—The General Command of the Hudson Offered to Arnold—Declined by him—Given to Putnam—Appointment of Dr. Craik in the Medical Department—Expedition Planned against Fort Independence—But Relinquished—Washington Shifts his Camp to Middlebrook—State of his Army—General Howe Crosses into the Jerseys—Position of the Two Armies at Middlebrook and behind the Raritan—Correspondence between Washington and Colonel Reed. 124

CHAP. XI.—Feigned Movements of Sir William Howe—Baffling Caution of Washington—Rumored Inroads from the North—Schuyler Applies for Reinforcements—Renewed Schemes of Howe to Draw Washington from his Stronghold—Skirmish between Cornwallis and Lord Stirling—The Enemy Evacuate the Jerseys—Perplexity as to their Next Movement—A Hostile Fleet on Lake Champlain—Burgoyne Approaching Ticonderoga—Speculations of Washington—His Purpose of

PAGE

Keeping Sir William Howe from Ascending the Hudson—Orders George Clinton to Call out Militia from Ulster and Orange Counties —Sends Sullivan towards the Highlands— Moves his Own Camp back to Morristown— Stir among the Shipping—Their Destination Surmised to be Philadelphia—A Dinner at Headquarters — Alexander Hamilton—Graydon's Rueful Description of the Army—His Character of Wayne 141

CHAP. XII.—British Invasion from Canada—The Plan—Composition of the Invading Army— Schuyler on the Alert—His Speculations as to the Enemy's Designs—Burgoyne on Lake Champlain — His War-Speech to his Indian Allies—Signs of his Approach Descried from Ticonderoga—Correspondence on the Subject between St. Clair, Major Livingston, and Schuyler—Burgoyne Intrenches near Ticonderoga — His Proclamation — Schuyler's Exertions at Albany to Forward Reinforcements — Hears that Ticonderoga is Evacuated — Mysterious Disappearance of St. Clair and his Troops — Amazement and Concern of Washington — Orders Reinforcements to Schuyler at Fort Edward, and to Putnam at Peekskill—Advances with his Main Army to the Clove—His Hopeful Spirit Manifested. 155

CHAP. XIII. — Particulars of the Evacuation — Indian Scouts in the Vicinity of the Fort— Outposts Abandoned by St. Clair—Burgoyne Secures Mount Hope—Invests the Fortress

PAGE

—Seizes and Occupies Sugar Hill—The Forts Overlooked and in Imminent Peril—Determination to Evacuate—Plan of Retreat—Part of the Garrison Depart for Skenesborough in the Flotilla—St. Clair Crosses with the Rest to Fort Independence — A Conflagration Reveals his Retreat—The British Camp Aroused—Fraser Pursues St. Clair—Burgoyne with his Squadron Makes after the Flotilla —Part of the Fugitives Overtaken—Flight of the Remainder to Fort Anne—Skirmish of Colonel Long—Retreat to Fort Edward—St. Clair at Castleton—Attack of his Rear-Guard —Fall of Colonel Francis — Desertion of Colonel Hale—St. Clair Reaches Fort Edward —Consternation of the Country—Exultation of the British 175

CHAP. XIV. — Capture of General Prescott — Proffered in Exchange for Lee — Reinforcements to Schuyler—Arnold Sent to the North —Eastern Militia to Repair to Saratoga— Further Reinforcements—Generals Lincoln and Arnold Recommended for Particular Service — Washington's Measures and Suggestions for the Northern Campaign—British Fleet Puts to Sea—Conjectures as to its Destination—A Feigned Letter—Appearance and Disappearance of the Fleet — Orders and Counter-Orders of Washington—Encamps at Germantown—Anxiety for the Security of the Highlands—George Clinton on Guard—Call on Connecticut. 191

PAGE

CHAP. XV.—Gates on the Alert for a Command—Schuyler Undermined in Congress—Put on his Guard—Courts a Scrutiny, but not before an Expected Engagement—Summoned with St. Clair to Headquarters—Gates Appointed to the Northern Department—Washington's Speculations on the Successes of Burgoyne—Ill-Judged Meddlings of Congress with the Commissariat—Colonel Trumbull Resigns in Consequence 207

CHAP. XVI.—Washington's Perplexities about the British Fleet—Putnam and Governor Clinton Put on the Alert in the Highlands—Morgan and his Riflemen Sent to the North—Washington at Philadelphia—His First Interview with Lafayette—Intelligence about the Fleet—Explanations of its Movements—Review of the Army—Lafayette Mistakes the Nature of his Commission—His Alliance with Washington—March of the Army through Philadelphia—Encampment at Wilmington 216

CHAP. XVII.—Burgoyne at Skenesborough—Prepares to Move towards the Hudson—Major Skene the Royalist—Slow March to Fort Anne—Schuyler at Fort Miller—Painted Warriors—Langlade—St. Luc—Honor of the Tomahawk—Tragical History of Miss McCrea—Its Results—Burgoyne Advances to Fort Edward—Schuyler at Stillwater—Joined by Lincoln—Burgoyne Deserted by his Indian Allies 230

PAGE

CHAP. XVIII.—Difficulties of Burgoyne—Plans an Expedition to Bennington—St. Leger before Fort Stanwix—General Herkimer at Oriskany—High Words with his Officers—A Dogged March—An Ambuscade—Battle of Oriskany—Johnson's Greens—Death of Herkimer—Spirited Sortie of Colonel Willett—Sir John Johnson Driven to the River—Flight of the Indians—Sacking of Sir John's Camp—Colonel Gansevoort Maintains his Post—Colonel Willett Sent in Quest of Aid—Arrives at Schuyler's Camp . . . 241

CHAP. XIX.—Schuyler Hears of the Affair of Oriskany—Applies for Reinforcements—His Appeal to the Patriotism of Stark—Schuyler Superseded—His Conduct thereupon—Relief Sent to Fort Stanwix—Arnold Volunteers to Conduct it—Change of Encampment—Patriotic Determination of Schuyler—Detachment of the Enemy against Bennington—Germans and their Indian Allies—Baum, the Hessian Leader—Stark in the Field—Mustering of the Militia—A Belligerent Parson—Battle of Bennington—Breyman to the Rescue—Routed—Reception of the News in the Rival Camps—Washington Urges New England to Follow up the Blow 256

CHAP. XX.—Stratagem of Arnold to Relieve Fort Stanwix—Yan Yost Cuyler—The Siege Pressed—Indians Intractable—Success of Arnold's Stratagem—Harassed Retreat of St. Leger—Moral Effect of the Two Blows Given

PAGE

to the Enemy—Brightening Prospects in the American Camp—Arrival of Gates—Magnanimous Conduct of Schuyler—Poorly Requited by Gates — Correspondence between Gates and Burgoyne Concerning the Murder of Miss McCrea 274

CHAP. XXI.—Landing of Howe's Army on Elk River—Measures to Check it—Exposed Situation of Washington in Reconnoitering—Alarm of the Country—Proclamation of Howe —Arrival of Sullivan—Foreign Officers in Camp — Deborre — Conway — Fleury—Count Pulaski—First Appearance in the Army of "Light-Horse Harry" of Virginia—Washington's Appeal to the Army—Movements of the Rival Forces—Battle of the Brandywine —Retreat of the Americans—Halt in Chester — Scenes in Philadelphia During the Battle —Congress Orders out Militia—Clothes Washington with Extraordinary Powers—Removes to Lancaster—Rewards to Foreign Officers . 285

CHAP. XXII.—General Howe Neglects to Pursue his Advantage — Washington Retreats to Germantown—Recrosses the Schuylkill and Prepares for another Action—Prevented by Storms of Rain—Retreats to French Creek—Wayne Detached to Fall on the Enemy's Rear—His Pickets Surprised—Massacre of Wayne's Men—Manœuvres of Howe on the Schuylkill—Washington Sends for Reinforcements—Howe Marches into Philadelphia . 309

PAGE

CHAP. XXIII.—Dubious Position of Burgoyne—Collects his Forces—Ladies of Distinction in his Camp—Lady Harriet Ackland—The Baroness de Riedesel—American Army Reinforced—Silent Movements of Burgoyne—Watched from the Summit of the Hills—His March along the Hudson—Position of the Two Camps—Battle of the 19th September—Burgoyne Encamps Nearer—Fortifies his Camp—Promised Co-operation by Sir Henry Clinton—Determines to Await it—Quarrel between Gates and Arnold—Arnold Deprived of Command—Burgoyne Waits for Co-operation 320

CHAP. XXIV.—Preparations of Sir Henry Clinton—State of the Highland Defenses—Putnam Alarmed—Advance of the Armament up the Hudson—Plan of Sir Henry Clinton—Peekskill Threatened—Putnam Deceived—Secret March of the Enemy through the Mountains—Forts Montgomery and Clinton Overpowered—Narrow Escape of the Commanders—Conflagration and Explosion of the American Frigates—Rallying Efforts of Putnam and Governor Clinton—The Spy and the Silver Bullet—Esopus Burnt—Ravaging Progress of the Enemy up the Hudson . . 342

CHAP. XXV.—Scarcity in the British Camp—Gates Bides his Time—Foraging Movement of Burgoyne—Battle of the 7th October—Rout of the British and Hessians—Situation of the Baroness Riedesel and Lady Harriet Ackland

PAGE

During the Battle—Death of Gen. Fraser—His Funeral—Night Retreat of the British—Expedition of Lady Harriet Ackland—Desperate Situation of Burgoyne at Saratoga—Capitulation — Surrender — Conduct of the American Troops — Scenes in the Camp—Gallant Courtesy of Schuyler to the Baroness Riedesel—His Magnanimous Conduct toward Burgoyne—Return of the British down the Hudson 359

CHAP. XXVI. — Washington Advances to Skippack Creek—The British Fleet in the Delaware —Forts and Obstructions in the River—Washington Meditates an Attack on the British Camp—Battle of Germantown 392

CHAP. XXVII.—Washington at White Marsh—Measures to Cut off the Enemy's Supplies —The Forts on the Delaware Reinforced—Colonel Green of Rhode Island at Fort Mercer —Attack and Defense of that Fort—Death of Count Donop 408

Illustrations.

PAGE

WASHINGTON CROSSING THE DELAWARE, *Frontispiece*
From a painting by E. Lentze.

BATTLE-GROUNDS AT TRENTON 9

GENERAL HUGH MERCER 22
From a pencil drawing by Col. J. Trumbull.

BATTLE OF PRINCETON—DEATH OF MERCER . 30
From a painting by Col. J. Trumbull.

OLD CITY HALL, WALL STREET, N. Y., 1789 . 60
From a design by Smillie.

THE RHINELANDER SUGAR-HOUSE PRISON . 68
Redrawn from an old print.

MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN SULLIVAN 150

BATTLE OF BENNINGTON 266
From a painting by A. Chappel.

COUNT KASIMIR PULASKI 290
Reproduced from a painting by Oleszkiewicz.

GENERAL, THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE . 302
From a French print, 1781.

PAGE

BEMIS HEIGHTS AT THE TIME OF THE REVOLUTION 328
Redrawn from an old wood-cut.

HOUSE AT KINGSTON, NEW YORK, IN WHICH THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE WAS DRAWN UP 358
Redrawn from Barber's "Historical Collection."

Life of George Washington

LIFE OF WASHINGTON.

Chapter II.

Treatment of the Hessian Prisoners—Their Interviews with Washington—Their Reception by the People.

THE Hessian prisoners were conveyed across the Delaware by Johnson's Ferry, into Pennsylvania; the private soldiers were marched off immediately to Newtown; the officers, twenty-three in number, remained in a small chamber in the Ferry House, where, according to their own account, they passed a dismal night; sore at heart that their recent triumphs at White Plains and Fort Washington should be so suddenly eclipsed.

On the following morning they were conducted to Newtown under the escort of Colonel Weedon. "His exterior," writes Lieutenant Piel, "spoke but little in his favor, yet he won all our hearts by his kind and friendly conduct."

At Newtown the officers were quartered in inns and private houses, the soldiers in the church and jail. The officers paid a visit to Lord Stirling, whom some of them had known from his being captured at Long Island. He received them with great kindness. "Your general, Van Heister," said he, "treated me like a brother when I was a prisoner, and so, gentlemen, will you be treated by me."

"We had scarce seated ourselves," continues Lieutenant Piel, "when a long, meagre, dark-looking man, whom we took for the parson of the place, stepped forth and held a discourse in German, in which he endeavored to set forth the justice of the American side in this war. He told us he was a Hanoverian born; called the King of England nothing but the Elector of Hanover, and spoke of him so contemptuously that his garrulity became intolerable. We answered that we had not come to America to inquire which party was in the right; but to fight for the king.

"Lord Stirling, seeing how little we were edified by the preacher, relieved us from him by proposing to take us with him to visit General Washington. The latter received us very courteously, though we understood very little of what he said, as he spoke nothing but English, a language in which none of us at

that time were strong. In his aspect shines forth nothing of the great man that he is universally considered. His eyes have scarce any fire. There is, however, a smiling expression on his countenance when he speaks, that wins affection and respect. He invited four of our officers to dine with him; the rest dined with Lord Stirling." One of those who dined with the commander-in-chief, was the satirical lieutenant whom we have so often quoted, and who was stationed at the picket on the morning of the attack. However disparagingly he may have thought of his unfortunate commander, he evidently had a very good opinion of himself.

"General Washington," writes he in his journal, "did me the honor to converse a good deal with me concerning the unfortunate affair. I told him freely my opinion that even our dispositions had been bad, otherwise we should not have fallen into his hands. He asked me if I could have made better dispositions, and in what manner? I told him yes; stated all the faults of our arrangements, and showed him how I would have done; and would have managed to come out of the affair with honor."

We have no doubt, from the specimens furnished in the lieutenant's journal, that he went largely into his own merits and achievements,

and the demerits and shortcomings of his luckless commander. Washington, he added, not only applauded his exposition of what he would have done, but made him a eulogy thereupon, and upon his watchfulness and the defense he had made with his handful of men when his picket was attacked. Yet according to his own account, in his journal, with all his watchfulness, he came near being caught napping.

"General Washington," continues he, "is a courteous and polite man, but very cautious and reserved; talks little; and has a crafty (listige) physiognomy." We surmise the lieutenant had the most of the talk on that occasion, and that the crafty or sly expression in Washington's physiognomy may have been a lurking but suppressed smile, provoked by the lieutenant's self-laudation and wordiness.

The Hessian prisoners were subsequently transferred from place to place, until they reached Winchester in the interior of Virginia. Wherever they arrived, people thronged from far and near to see these terrible beings of whom they had received such formidable accounts; and were surprised and disappointed to find them looking like other men. At first they had to endure the hootings and revilings of the multitude, for having hired themselves out to the trade of blood; and they especially

speak of the scoldings they received from old women in the villages, who upbraided them for coming to rob them of their liberty. "At length," writes the corporal in his journal, "General Washington had written notices put up in town and country, that we were innocent of this war and had joined in it not of our free will, but through compulsion. We should, therefore, be treated not as enemies, but friends. From this time," adds he, "things went better with us. Every day came many out of the towns, old and young, rich and poor, and brought us provisions, and treated us with kindness and humanity." *

* Tagebuch des Corporals Johannes Reuber.—MS.

Chapter II.

Episode—Colonel Griffin in the Jerseys—Donop Decoyed—Inroad of Cadwalader and Reed—Retreat and Confusion of the Enemy's Outposts—Washington Recrosses the Delaware with his Troops—The Game Reversed—The Hessians Hunted Back through the Country—Washington Made Military Dictator.

THERE was a kind of episode in the affair at Trenton. Colonel Griffin, who had thrown himself previously into the Jerseys with his detachment of Pennsylvania militia, found himself, through indisposition and the scanty number of his troops, unable to render efficient service in the proposed attack. He sent word to Cadwalader, therefore, that he should probably render him more real aid by making a demonstration in front of Donop, and drawing him off so far into the interior as to be out of the way of rendering support to Colonel Rahl.

He accordingly presented himself in sight of

Donop's cantonment on the 25th of December, and succeeded in drawing him out with nearly his whole force of two thousand men. He then retired slowly before him, skirmishing, but avoiding anything like an action, until he had lured him as far as Mount Holly; when he left him to find his way back to his post at his leisure.

The cannonade of Washington's attack in Trenton on the morning of the 26th, was distinctly heard at Cadwalader's camp at Bristol. Imperfect tidings of the result reached there about eleven o'clock, and produced the highest exultation and excitement. Cadwalader made another attempt to cross the river and join Washington, whom he supposed to be still in the Jerseys, following up the blow he had struck. He could not effect the passage of the river with the most of the troops, until midday of the 27th, when he received from Washington a detailed account of his success, and of his having recrossed into Pennsylvania.

Cadwalader was now in a dilemma. Donop, he presumed, was still at Mount Holly, whither Griffin had decoyed him; but he might soon march back. His forces were equal, if not superior in number to his own, and veterans instead of raw militia. But then there was the glory of rivalling the exploit at Trenton, and

the importance of following out the effort for the relief of the Jerseys, and the salvation of Philadelphia. Besides, Washington, in all probability, after disposing of his prisoners, had again crossed into the Jerseys and might be acting offensively.

Reed relieved Cadwalader from his dilemma, by proposing that they should push on to Burlington, and there determine, according to intelligence, whether to proceed to Bordentown or Mount Holly. The plan was adopted. There was an alarm that the Hessian yagers lurked in a neighboring wood. Reed, accompanied by two officers, rode in advance to reconnoiter. He sent word to Cadwalader that it was a false alarm, and the latter took up his line of march.

Reed and his companions spurred on to reconnoiter the enemy's outposts, about four miles from Burlington, but pulled up at the place where the picket was usually stationed. There was no smoke, nor any sign of a human being. They rode up and found the place deserted. From the country people in the neighborhood they received an explanation. Count Donop had returned to his post from the pursuit of Griffin, only in time to hear of the disaster at Trenton. He immediately began a retreat in the utmost panic and confusion, calling in his guards and parties as he hurried

forward. The troops in the neighborhood of Burlington had decamped precipitately the preceding evening.

Colonel Reed sent back intelligence of this to Cadwalader, and still pushed on with his companions. As they rode along, they observed the inhabitants pulling down red rags which had been nailed to their doors; tory signs to insure good-will from the British. Arrived at Bordentown not an enemy was to be seen; the fugitives from Trenton had spread a panic on the 26th, and the Hessians and their refugee adherents had fled in confusion, leaving their sick behind them. The broken and haggard looks of the inhabitants showed what they had suffered during the Hessian occupation. One of Reed's companions returned to Cadwalader, who had halted at Burlington, and advised him to proceed.

Cadwalader wrote in the night to Washington, informing him of his whereabouts, and that he should march for Bordentown in the morning. "If you should think proper to cross over," added he, "it may easily be effected at the place where we passed; a pursuit would keep up the panic. They went off with great precipitation, and pressed all the wagons in their reach; I am told many of them are gone to South Amboy. If we can drive them

from West Jersey, the success will raise an army next spring, and establish the credit of the continental money to support it."

There was another letter from Cadwalader, dated on the following day, from Bordentown. He had eighteen hundred men with him. Five hundred more were on the way to join him. General Mifflin, too, had sent over five hundred from Philadelphia, and three hundred from Burlington, and was to follow with seven or eight hundred more.

Colonel Reed, too, wrote from Trenton on the 28th. He had found that place without a single soldier of either army, and in a still more wretched condition than Bordentown. He urged Washington to recross the river, and pursue the advantages already gained. Donop might be overtaken before he could reach Princeton or Brunswick, where the enemy were yet in force.*

Washington needed no prompting of the kind. Bent upon following up his blow, he had barely allowed his troops a day or two to recover from recent exposure and fatigue, that they might have strength and spirit to pursue the retreating enemy, beat up other of their quarters, and entirely reverse affairs in the

* *Life and Correspondence of Pres. Reed*, vol. i., p. 281.

Jerseys. In this spirit he had written to Generals McDougall and Maxwell at Morristown, to collect as large a body of militia as possible, and harass the enemy in flank and rear. Heath, also, had been ordered to abandon the Highlands, which there was no need of guarding at this season of the year, and hasten down with the eastern militia, as rapidly as possible, by the way of Hackensack, continuing on until he should send him further orders. "A fair opportunity is offered," said he, "of driving the enemy entirely from the Jerseys, or at least to the extremity of the province."

Men of influence also were despatched by him into different parts of the Jerseys, to spirit up the militia to revenge the oppression, the ravage, and insults they had experienced from the enemy, especially from the Hessians. "If what they have suffered," said he, "does not rouse their resentment, they must not possess the feelings of humanity."

On the 29th his troops began to cross the river. It would be a slow and difficult operation, owing to the ice; two parties of light troops, therefore, were detached in advance, whom Colonel Reed was to send in pursuit of the enemy. They marched into Trenton about two o'clock, and were immediately put on the traces of Donop, to hang on his rear and harass

him until other troops should come up. Cadwalader also detached a party of riflemen from Bordentown with like orders. Donop, in retreating, had divided his force, sending one part by a cross-road to Princeton, and hurrying on with the remainder to Brunswick. Notwithstanding the severity of the weather, and the wretchedness of the road, it was a service of animation and delight to the American troops to hunt back these Hessians through the country they had recently outraged, and over ground which they themselves had trodden so painfully and despondingly in their retreat. In one instance the riflemen surprised and captured a party of refugees who lingered in the rear-guard, among whom were several newly-made officers. Never was there a more sudden reversal in the game of war than this retreat of the heavy German veterans, harassed by light parties of a raw militia, which they so lately had driven like chaff before them.

While this was going on, Washington was effecting the passage of his main force to Trenton. He himself had crossed on the 29th of December, but it took two days more to get the troops and artillery over the icy river, and that with great labor and difficulty. And now came a perplexity. With the year expired the term of several regiments, which had seen

most service, and become inured to danger. Knowing how indispensable were such troops to lead on those which were raw and undisciplined, Washington had them paraded and invited to re-enlist. It was a difficult task to persuade them. They were haggard with fatigue, and hardship, and privation of every kind; and their hearts yearned for home. By the persuasions of their officers, however, and a bounty of ten dollars, the greater proportion of those from the eastward were induced to remain six weeks longer.

Hard money was necessary in this emergency. How was it to be furnished? The military chest was incompetent. On the 30th, Washington wrote by express to Robert Morris, the patriot financier at Philadelphia, whom he knew to be eager that the blow should be followed up. "If you could possibly collect a sum, if it were but one hundred, or one hundred and fifty pounds, it would be of service."

Morris received the letter in the evening. He was at his wit's end to raise the sum, for hard money was scarce. Fortunately a wealthy Quaker in this moment of exigency supplied "the sinews of war," and early the next morning the money was forwarded by the express.

At this critical moment, too, Washington re-

ceived a letter from a committee of Congress, transmitting him resolves of that body dated the 27th of December, investing him with military powers quite dictatorial. "Happy is it for this country," write the committee, "that the general of their forces can safely be intrusted with the most unlimited power, and neither personal security, liberty, or property, be in the least degree endangered thereby." *

Washington's acknowledgment of this great mark of confidence was noble and characteristic. "I find Congress have done me the honor to intrust me with powers, in my military capacity, of the highest nature and almost unlimited extent. Instead of thinking myself freed from all *civil* obligations by this mark of their confidence, I shall constantly bear in mind that, as the sword was the last resort for the preservation of our liberties, so it ought to be the first thing laid aside when those liberties are firmly established."

* *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, iii., 1510.

Chapter III.

Howe Hears of the Affair at Trenton—Cornwallis Sent Back to the Jerseys—Reconnoitering Expedition of Reed—His Exploits—Washington in Peril at Trenton—Reinforced by Troops under Cadwalader and Mifflin—Position of his Men—Cornwallis at Trenton—Repulsed at the Assunpink—The American Camp Menaced—Night March of Washington—Affair at Princeton—Death of Mercer—Rout of British Troops—Pursued by Washington—Cornwallis at Princeton—Baffled and Perplexed—Washington at Morristown—His System of Annoyance—The Tables Turned upon the Enemy.

GENERAL HOWE was taking his ease in winter quarters at New York, waiting for the freezing of the Delaware to pursue his triumphant march to Philadelphia, when tidings were brought him of the surprise and capture of the Hessians at Trenton. "That three old established regiments of a people who made war their profession, should lay down their arms to a ragged and undisci-

plined militia, and that with scarcely any loss on either side," was a matter of amazement. He instantly stopped Lord Cornwallis, who was on the point of embarking for England, and sent him back in all haste to resume the command in the Jerseys.

The ice in the Delaware impeded the crossing of the American troops, and gave the British time to draw in their scattered cantonments and assemble their whole force at Princeton. While his troops were yet crossing, Washington sent out Colonel Reed to reconnoiter the position and movements of the enemy and obtain information. Six of the Philadelphia light horse, spirited young fellows, but who had never seen service, volunteered to accompany Reed. They patrolled the country to the very vicinity of Princeton, but could collect no information from the inhabitants; who were harassed, terrified, and bewildered by the ravaging marches to and fro of friend and enemy.

Emerging from a wood almost within view of Princeton, they caught sight, from a rising ground, of two or three red-coats passing from time to time from a barn to a dwelling-house. Here must be an outpost. Keeping the barn in a line with the house so as to cover their approach, they dashed up to the latter without being discovered, and surrounded it. Twelve

British dragoons were within, who, though well armed, were so panic-stricken that they surrendered without making defense. A commissary, also, was taken; the sergeant of the dragoons alone escaped. Colonel Reed and his six cavaliers returned in triumph to headquarters. Important information was obtained from their prisoners. Lord Cornwallis had joined General Grant the day before at Princeton, with a reinforcement of chosen troops. They had now seven or eight thousand men, and were pressing wagons for a march upon Trenton.*

Cadwalader, stationed at Crosswicks, about seven miles distant, between Bordentown and Trenton, sent intelligence to the same purport, received by him from a young gentleman who had escaped from Princeton.

Word, too, was brought from other quarters, that General Howe was on the march with a thousand light troops with which he had landed at Amboy.

The situation of Washington was growing critical. The enemy were beginning to advance their large pickets towards Trenton. Everything indicated an approaching attack. The force with him was small; to retreat across the river would destroy the dawn of hope awakened

* *Life of Reed*, i., 282.

in the bosoms of the Jersey militia by the late exploit; but to make a stand without reinforcements was impossible. In this emergency, he called to his aid General Cadwalader from Crosswicks, and General Mifflin from Bordentown, with their collective forces, amounting to about three thousand six hundred men. He did it with reluctance, for it seemed like involving them in the common danger; but the exigency of the case admitted of no alternative. They promptly answered to his call, and marching in the night, joined him on the 1st of January.

Washington chose a position for his main body on the east side of the Assunpink. There was a narrow stone bridge across it, where the water was very deep—the same bridge over which part of Rahl's brigade had escaped in the recent affair. He planted his artillery so as to command the bridge and the fords. His advance guard was stationed about three miles off in a wood, having in front a stream called Shabbakong Creek.

Early on the morning of the 2d, came certain word that Cornwallis was approaching with all his force. Strong parties were sent out under General Greene, who skirmished with the enemy and harassed them in their advance. By twelve o'clock they reached the Shabba-

kong, and halted for a time on its northern bank. Then crossing it, and moving forward with rapidity, they drove the advance guard out of the woods, and pushed on until they reached a high ground near the town. Here Hand's corps of several battalions was drawn up, and held them for a time in check. All the parties in advance ultimately retreated to the main body, on the east side of the Assunpink, and found some difficulty in crowding across the narrow bridge.

From all these checks and delays, it was nearly sunset before Cornwallis with the head of his army entered Trenton. His rear-guard under General Leslie rested at Maiden Head, about six miles distant, and nearly half way between Trenton and Princeton. Forming his troops into columns, he now made repeated attempts to cross the Assunpink at the bridge and the fords, but was as often repulsed by the artillery. For a part of the time Washington, mounted on a white horse, stationed himself at the south end of the bridge, issuing his orders. Each time the enemy was repulsed there was a shout along the American lines. At length they drew off, came to a halt, and lighted their camp fires. The Americans did the same, using the neighboring fences for the purpose. Sir William Erskine, who was with

Cornwallis, urged him, it is said, to attack Washington that evening in his camp; but his lordship declined; he felt sure of the game which had so often escaped him; he had at length, he thought, got Washington into a situation from which he could not escape, but where he might make a desperate stand, and he was willing to give his wearied troops a night's repose to prepare them for the closing struggle. He would be sure, he said, to "bag the fox in the morning."

A cannonade was kept up on both sides until dark; but with little damage to the Americans. When night closed in, the two camps lay in sight of each other's fires, ruminating the bloody action of the following day. It was the most gloomy and anxious night that had yet closed in on the American army, throughout its series of perils and disasters; for there was no concealing the impending danger. But what must have been the feelings of the commander-in-chief, as he anxiously patrolled his camp, and considered his desperate position? A small stream, fordable in several places, was all that separated his raw, inexperienced army, from an enemy vastly superior in numbers and discipline, and stung to action by the mortification of a late defeat. A general action with them must be ruinous; but how was he to re-

treat? Behind him was the Delaware, impassable from floating ice. Granting even (a thing not to be hoped) that a retreat across it could be effected, the consequences would be equally fatal. The Jerseys would be left in possession of the enemy, endangering the immediate capture of Philadelphia, and sinking the public mind into despondency.

In this darkest of moments a gleam of hope flashed upon his mind: a bold expedient suggested itself. Almost the whole of the enemy's force must by this time be drawn out of Princeton, and advancing by detachments toward Trenton, while their baggage and principal stores must remain weakly guarded at Brunswick. Was it not possible by a rapid night-march along the Quaker road, a different road from that on which General Leslie with the rear-guard was resting, to get past that force undiscovered, come by surprise upon those left at Princeton, capture or destroy what stores were left there, and then push on to Brunswick? This would save the army from being cut off; would avoid the appearance of a defeat; and might draw the enemy away from Trenton, while some fortunate stroke might give additional reputation to the American arms. Even should the enemy march on to Philadelphia, it could not in any case be

prevented; while a counter-blow in the Jerseys would be a great consolation.

Such was the plan which Washington revolved in his mind on the gloomy banks of the Assunpink, and which he laid before his officers in a council of war, held after nightfall, at the quarters of General Mercer. It met with instant concurrence, being of that hardy, adventurous kind, which seems congenial with the American character. One formidable difficulty presented itself. The weather was unusually mild; there was a thaw, by which the roads might be rendered deep and miry, and almost impassable. Fortunately, or rather providentially, as Washington was prone to consider it, the wind veered to the north in the course of the evening; the weather became intensely cold, and in two hours the roads were once more hard and frost-bound. In the meantime, the baggage of the army was silently removed to Burlington, and every other preparation was made for a rapid march. To deceive the enemy, men were employed to dig trenches near the bridge within hearing of the British sentries, with orders to continue noisily at work until daybreak; others were to go the rounds; relieve guards at the bridge and fords; keep up the camp fires, and maintain all the appearance of a regular encampment.

G.R.Hall

At daybreak they were to hasten after the army.

In the dead of the night, the army drew quietly out of the encampment and began its march. General Mercer, mounted on a favorite gray horse, was in the advance with the remnant of his flying camp, now but about three hundred and fifty men, principally relics of the brave Delaware and Maryland regiments, with some of the Pennsylvania militia. Among the latter were youths belonging to the best families in Philadelphia. The main body followed, under Washington's immediate command.

The Quaker road was a complete roundabout, joining the main road about two miles from Princeton, where Washington expected to arrive before daybreak. The road, however, was new and rugged; cut through woods, where the stumps of trees broke the wheels of some of the baggage trains, and retarded the march of the troops; so that it was near sunrise of a bright, frosty morning, when Washington reached the bridge over Stony Brook, about three miles from Princeton. After crossing the bridge, he led his troops along the bank of the brook to the edge of a wood, where a by-road led off on the right through low grounds, and was said by the guides to be a short cut to Princeton, and less exposed to

view. By this road Washington defiled with the main body, ordering Mercer to continue along the brook with his brigade, until he should arrive at the main road, where he was to secure, and if possible destroy, a bridge over which it passes; so as to intercept any fugitives from Princeton, and check any retrograde movements of the British troops which might have advanced towards Trenton.

Hitherto the movements of the Americans had been undiscovered by the enemy. Three regiments of the latter, the 17th, 40th, and 55th, with three troops of dragoons, had been quartered all night in Princeton, under marching orders to join Lord Cornwallis in the morning. The 17th regiment under Colonel Mawhood, was already on the march; the 55th regiment was preparing to follow. Mawhood had crossed the bridge by which the old or main road to Trenton passes over Stony Brook, and was proceeding through a wood beyond, when, as he attained the summit of a hill about sunrise, the glittering of arms betrayed to him the movement of Mercer's troops to the left, who were filing along the Quaker road to secure the bridge, as they had been ordered.

The woods prevented him from seeing their number. He supposed them to be some broken

portion of the American army flying before Lord Cornwallis. With this idea, he faced about and made a retrograde movement, to intercept them or hold them in check; while messengers spurred off at all speed, to hasten forward the regiments still lingering at Princeton, so as completely to surround them.

The woods concealed him until he had recrossed the bridge of Stony Brook, when he came in full sight of the van of Mercer's brigade. Both parties pushed to get possession of a rising ground on the right near the house of a Mr. Clark, of the peaceful Society of Friends. The Americans being nearest, reached it first, and formed behind a hedge fence which extended along a slope in front of the house; whence being chiefly armed with rifles, they opened a destructive fire. It was returned with great spirit by the enemy. At the first discharge Mercer was dismounted, "his gallant gray" being crippled by a musket ball in the leg. One of his colonels, also, was mortally wounded and carried to the rear. Availing themselves of the confusion thus occasioned, the British charged with the bayonet; the American riflemen, having no weapon of the kind, were thrown into disorder and retreated. Mercer, who was on foot, endeavored to rally them, when a blow from the butt end

of a musket felled him to the ground. He rose and defended himself with his sword, but was surrounded, bayoneted repeatedly, and left for dead.

Mawhood pursued the broken and retreating troops to the brow of the rising ground, on which Clark's house was situated, when he beheld a large force emerging from a wood and advancing to the rescue. It was a body of Pennsylvania militia, which Washington, on hearing the firing, had detached to the support of Mercer. Mawhood instantly ceased pursuit, drew up his artillery, and by a heavy discharge brought the militia to a stand.

At this moment Washington himself arrived at the scene of action, having galloped from the by-road in advance of his troops. From a rising ground he beheld Mercer's troops retreating in confusion, and the detachment of militia checked by Mawhood's artillery. Everything was at peril. Putting spurs to his horse, he dashed past the hesitating militia, waving his hat and cheering them on. His commanding figure and white horse made him a conspicuous object for the enemy's marksmen, but he heeded it not. Galloping forward under the fire of Mawhood's battery, he called upon Mercer's broken brigade. The Pennsylvanians rallied at the sound of his voice, and

caught fire from his example. At the same time the 7th Virginia regiment emerged from the wood, and moved forward with loud cheers, while a fire of grapeshot was opened by Captain Moulder of the American artillery, from the brow of a ridge to the south.

Colonel Mawhood, who a moment before had thought his triumph secure, found himself assailed on every side, and separated from the other British regiments. He fought, however, with great bravery, and for a short time the action was desperate. Washington was in the midst of it; equally endangered by the random fire of his own men, and the artillery and musketry of the enemy. His aide-de-camp, Colonel Fitzgerald, a young and ardent Irishman, losing sight of him in the heat of the fight when enveloped in dust and smoke, dropped the bridle on the neck of his horse, and drew his hat over his eyes, giving him up for lost. When he saw him, however, emerge from the cloud, waving his hat, and beheld the enemy giving way, he spurred up to his side. "Thank God," said he, "your Excellency is safe!" "Away, my dear colonel, and bring up the troops," was the reply; "the day is our own!" It was one of those occasions in which the latent fire of Washington's character blazed forth.

Mawhood, by this time, had forced his way, at the point of the bayonet, through gathering foes, though with heavy loss, back to the main road, and was in full retreat towards Trenton to join Cornwallis. Washington detached Major Kelly with a party of Pennsylvania troops, to destroy the bridge at Stony Brook, over which Mawhood had retreated, so as to impede the advance of General Leslie from Maiden Head.

In the meantime the 55th regiment, which had been on the left and nearer Princeton, had been encountered by the American advance guard under General St. Clair, and after some sharp fighting in a ravine had given way, and was retreating across fields and along a by-road to Brunswick. The remaining regiment, the 40th, had not been able to come up in time for the action; a part of it fled toward Brunswick; the residue took refuge in the college at Princeton, recently occupied by them as barracks. Artillery was now brought to bear on the college, and a few shot compelled those within to surrender.

In this brief but brilliant action, about one hundred of the British were left dead on the field, and nearly three hundred taken prisoners, fourteen of whom were officers. Among the slain was Captain Leslie, son of the Earl

of Leven. His death was greatly lamented by his captured companions.

The loss of the Americans was about twenty-five or thirty men and several officers. Among the latter was Colonel Haslet, who had distinguished himself throughout the campaign, by being among the foremost in services of danger. He was indeed a gallant officer, and gallantly seconded by his Delaware troops.

A greater loss was that of General Mercer. He was said to be either dead or dying, in the house of Mr. Clark, whither he had been conveyed by his aide-de-camp, Major Armstrong, who found him, after the retreat of Mawhood's troops, lying on the field gashed with several wounds, and insensible from cold and loss of blood. Washington would have ridden back from Princeton to visit him, and have him conveyed to a place of greater security; but was assured, that, if alive, he was too desperately wounded to bear removal; in the meantime he was in good hands, being faithfully attended to by his aide-de-camp, Major Armstrong, and treated with the utmost care and kindness by Mr. Clark's family." *

Under these circumstances Washington felt compelled to leave his old companion in arms

* See Washington to Colonel Reed, Jan. 15.

to his fate. Indeed, he was called away by the exigencies of his command, having to pursue the routed regiments which were making a headlong retreat to Brunswick. In this pursuit he took the lead at the head of a detachment of cavalry. At Kingston, however, three miles to the northeast of Princeton, he pulled up, restrained his ardor, and held a council of war on horseback. Should he keep on to Brunswick or not? The capture of the British stores and baggage would make his triumph complete; but, on the other hand, his troops were excessively fatigued by their rapid march all night and hard fight in the morning. All of them had been one night without sleep, and some of them two, and many were half-starved. They were without blankets, thinly clad, some of them barefooted, and this in freezing weather. Cornwallis would be upon them before they could reach Brunswick. His rear-guard, under General Leslie, had been quartered but six miles from Princeton, and the retreating troops must have roused them. Under these considerations, it was determined to discontinue the pursuit and push for Morristown. There they would be in a mountainous country, heavily wooded, in an abundant neighborhood, and on the flank of the enemy, with various

defiles by which they might change their position according to his movements.

Filing off to the left, therefore, from Kingston, and breaking down the bridges behind him, Washington took the narrow road by Rocky Hill to Pluckamin. His troops were so exhausted, that many in the course of the march would lie down in the woods on the frozen ground and fall asleep, and were with difficulty roused and cheered forward. At Pluckamin he halted for a time, to allow them a little repose and refreshment. While they are taking breath we will cast our eyes back to the camp of Cornwallis, to see what was the effect upon him of this masterly movement of Washington. His lordship had retired to rest at Trenton with the sportsman's vaunt that he would "bag the fox in the morning." Nothing could surpass his surprise and chagrin when at daybreak the expiring watchfires and deserted camp of the Americans told him that the prize had once more evaded his grasp ; that the general whose military skill he had decried had outgeneralled him.

For a time he could not learn whither the army, which had stolen away so silently, had directed its stealthy march. By sunrise, however, there was the booming of cannon, like

the rumbling of distant thunder, in the direction of Princeton. The idea flashed upon him that Washington had not merely escaped, but was about to make a dash at the British magazines at Brunswick. Alarmed for the safety of his military stores, his lordship forthwith broke up his camp, and made a rapid march towards Princeton. As he arrived in sight of the bridge over Stony Brook, he beheld Major Kelly and his party busy in its destruction. A distant discharge of round shot from his field-pieces drove them away, but the bridge was already broken. It would take time to repair it for the passage of the artillery; so Cornwallis in his impatience urged his troops breast-high through the turbulent and icy stream, and again pushed forward. He was brought to a stand by the discharge of a thirty-two pounder from a distant breastwork. Supposing the Americans to be there in force, and prepared to make resistance, he sent out some horsemen to reconnoiter, and advanced to storm the battery. There was no one there. The thirty-two pounder had been left behind by the Americans, as too unwieldly, and a match had been applied to it by some lingerer of Washington's rear-guard.

Without further delay Cornwallis hurried forward, eager to save his magazines. Cross-

ing the bridge at Kingston, he kept on along the Brunswick road, supposing Washington still before him. The latter had got far in the advance, during the delays caused by the broken bridge at Stony Brook, and the discharge of the thirty-two pounder; and the alteration of his course at Kingston had carried him completely out of the way of Cornwallis. His lordship reached Brunswick towards evening, and endeavored to console himself, by the safety of the military stores, for being so completely foiled and out-manœuvred.

Washington, in the meantime, was all on the alert; the lion part of his nature was aroused; and while his weary troops were in a manner panting upon the ground around him, he was despatching missives and calling out aid to enable him to follow up his successes. In a letter to Putnam, written from Pluckamin during the halt, he says: "The enemy appear to be panic-struck. I am in hopes of driving them out of the Jerseys. March the troops under your command to Crosswicks, and keep a strict watch upon the enemy in this quarter. Keep as many spies out as you think proper. A number of horsemen in the dress of the country must be kept constantly going backwards and forwards for this purpose. If you discover any motion of the enemy of conse-

quence, let me be informed thereof as soon as possible, by express."

To General Heath, also, who was stationed in the Highlands of the Hudson, he wrote at the same hurried moment. "The enemy are in great consternation; and as the panic affords us a favorable opportunity to drive them out of the Jerseys, it has been determined in council that you should move down towards New York with a considerable force, as if you had a design upon the city. That being an object of great importance, the enemy will be reduced to the necessity of withdrawing a considerable part of their force from the Jerseys, if not the whole, to secure the city."

These letters despatched, he continued forward to Morristown, where at length he came to a halt from his incessant and harassing marchings. There he learnt that General Mercer was still alive. He immediately sent his own nephew, Major George Lewis, under the protection of a flag, to attend upon him. Mercer had indeed been kindly nursed by a daughter of Mr. Clark and a negro woman, who had not been frightened from their home by the storm of battle which raged around it. At the time that the troops of Cornwallis approached, Major Armstrong was binding up Mercer's wounds. The latter insisted on his

leaving him in the kind hands of Mr. Clark's household, and rejoining the army. Lewis found him languishing in great pain; he had been treated with respect by the enemy, and great tenderness by the benevolent family who had sheltered him. He expired in the arms of Major Lewis on the 12th of January, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. Dr. Benjamin Rush, afterwards celebrated as a physician, was with him when he died.

He was upright, intelligent, and brave; esteemed as a soldier and beloved as a man, and by none more so than by Washington. His career as a general had been brief; but long enough to secure him a lasting renown. His name remains one of the consecrated names of the Revolution.

From Morristown, Washington again wrote to General Heath, repeating his former orders. To Major-General Lincoln, also, who was just arrived at Peekskill, and had command of the Massachusetts militia, he writes on the 7th, "General Heath will communicate mine of this date to you, by which you will find that the greater part of your troops are to move down towards New York, to draw the attention of the enemy to that quarter; and if they do not throw a considerable body back again, you may, in all probability, carry the city, or at

least blockade them in it. . . . Be as expeditious as possible in moving forward, for the sooner a panic-struck enemy is followed the better. If we can oblige them to evacuate the Jerseys, we must drive them to the utmost distress; for they have depended upon the supplies from that State for their winter's support."

Colonel Reed was ordered to send out rangers and bodies of militia to scour the country, waylay foraging parties, cut off supplies, and keep the cantonments of the enemy in a state of siege. "I would not suffer a man to stir beyond their lines," writes Washington, "nor suffer them to have the least communication with the country."

The expedition under General Heath toward New York, from which much had been anticipated by Washington, proved a failure. It moved in three divisions, by different routes, but all arriving nearly at the same time at the enemy's outpost at King's Bridge. There was some skirmishing, but the great feature of the expedition was a pompous and peremptory summons of Fort Independence to surrender. "Twenty minutes only can be allowed," said Heath, "for the garrison to give their answer, and, should it be in the negative, they must abide the consequences." The garrison made

no answer but an occasional cannonade. Heath failed to follow up his summons by corresponding deeds. He hovered and skirmished for some days about the outposts and Spyt den Duivel Creek, and then retired before a threatened snow-storm, and the report of an enemy's fleet from Rhode Island, with troops under Lord Percy, who might land in Westchester, and take the besieging force in rear.

Washington, while he spoke of Heath's failure with indulgence in his despatches to government, could not but give him a rebuke in a private letter. "Your summons," writes he, "as you did not attempt to fulfil your threats, was not only idle, but farcical; and will not fail of turning the laugh exceedingly upon us. These things I mention to you as a friend, for you will perceive they have composed no part of my public letter."

But though disappointed in this part of his plan, Washington, having received reinforcements of militia, continued, with his scanty army, to carry on his system of annoyance. The situation of Cornwallis, who but a short time before traversed the Jerseys so triumphantly, became daily more and more irksome. Spies were in his camp, to give notice of every movement, and foes without to take advantage of it; so that not a foraging party could sally

forth without being waylaid. By degrees he drew in his troops which were posted about the country, and collected them at New Brunswick and Amboy, so as to have a communication by water with New York, whence he was now compelled to draw nearly all his supplies; "presenting," to use the words of Hamilton, "the extraordinary spectacle of a powerful army, straitened within narrow limits by the phantom of a military force, and never permitted to transgress those limits with impunity."

In fact, the recent operations in the Jerseys had suddenly changed the whole aspect of the war, and given a triumphant close to what had been a disastrous campaign.

The troops, which for months had been driven from post to post, apparently an undisciplined rabble, had all at once turned upon their pursuers, and astounded them by brilliant stratagems and daring exploits. The commander, whose cautious policy had been sneered at by enemies, and regarded with impatience by misjudging friends, had all at once shown that he possessed enterprise as well as circumspection, energy as well as endurance, and that beneath his wary coldness lurked a fire to break forth at the proper moment. This year's campaign, the most critical one of the war,

and especially the part of it which occurred in the Jerseys, was the ordeal that made his great qualities fully appreciated by his countrymen, and gained for him from the statesmen and generals of Europe the appellation of the AMERICAN FABIUS.

Chapter IV.

Burke on the State of Affairs in America—New Jersey Roused to Arms—Washington Grants Safe Conduct to Hessian Convoys—Encampment at Morristown—Putnam at Princeton—His Stratagem to Conceal the Weakness of his Camp—Exploit of General Dickinson near Somerset Court-House—Washington's Counter Proclamation—Prevalence of the Small-pox—Inoculation of the Army—Contrast of the British and American Commanders and their Camps.

THE news of Washington's recrossing the Delaware, and of his subsequent achievements in the Jerseys, had not reached London on the 9th of January. "The affairs of America seem to be drawing to a crisis," writes Edmund Burke. "The Howes are at this time in possession of, or able to awe the whole middle coast of America, from Delaware to the western boundary of Massachusetts Bay; the naval barrier on the side of Canada is broken. A great tract is open for the supply

of the troops; the river Hudson opens a way into the heart of the provinces, and nothing can, in all probability, prevent an early and offensive campaign. What the Americans have done is, in their circumstances, truly astonishing; it is indeed infinitely more than I expected from them. But, having done so much for some short time, I began to entertain an opinion that they might do more. It is now, however, evident that they cannot look standing armies in the face. They are inferior in everything—even in numbers. There seem by the best accounts not to be above ten or twelve thousand men at most in their grand army. The rest are militia, and not wonderfully well composed or disciplined. They decline a general engagement; prudently enough, if their object had been to make the war attend upon a treaty of good terms of subjection; but when they look further, this will not do. An army that is obliged at all times, and in all situations, to decline an engagement, may delay their ruin, but can never defend their country." *

At the time when this was written, the Howes had learnt, to their mortification, that "the mere running through a province, is not subduing it." The British commanders had been outgeneralled, attacked, and defeated. They

* Burke's *Works*, vol. v., p. 125.

had nearly been driven out of the Jerseys, and were now hemmed in and held in check by Washington and his handful of men castled among the heights of Morristown. So far from holding possession of the territory they had so recently overrun, they were fain to ask safe conduct across it for a convoy to their soldiers captured in battle. It must have been a severe trial to the pride of Cornwallis, when he had to inquire by letter of Washington, whether money and stores could be sent to the Hessians captured at Trenton, and a surgeon and medicines to the wounded at Princeton; and Washington's reply must have conveyed a reproof still more mortifying: No molestation, he assured his lordship, would be offered to the convoy by any part of the regular army under his command; but "*he could not answer for the militia, who were resorting to arms in most parts of the State, and were excessively exasperated at the treatment they had met with from both Hessian and British troops.*"

In fact, the conduct of the enemy had roused the whole country against them. The proclamations and printed protections of the British commanders, on the faith of which the inhabitants in general had stayed at home, and forbore to take up arms, had proved of no avail. The Hessians could not or would not under-

stand them, but plundered friend and foe alike.* The British soldiery often followed their example, and the plunderings of both were at times attended by those brutal outrages on the weaker sex, which inflame the dullest spirits to revenge. The whole State was thus roused against its invaders. In Washington's retreat of more than a hundred miles through the Jerseys, he had never been joined by more than one hundred of its inhabitants; now sufferers of both parties rose as one man to avenge their personal injuries. The late quiet yeomanry armed themselves, and scoured the country in small parties to seize on stragglers, and the militia began to signalize themselves in voluntary skirmishes with regular troops.

In effect, Washington ordered a safe conduct to be given to the Hessian baggage as far as Philadelphia, and to the surgeon and medicines to Princeton, and permitted a Hessian sergeant and twelve men, unarmed, to attend the baggage until it was delivered to their countrymen.

* "These rascals plunder all indiscriminately. If they see anything they like, they say, 'Rebel good for Hesse-mans,' and seize upon it for their own use. They have no idea of the distinctions between whig and tory."—*Letter of Hazard the Postmaster.*

Morristown, where the main army was encamped, had not been chosen by Washington as a permanent post, but merely as a halting-place, where his troops might repose after their excessive fatigues and their sufferings from the inclement season. Further considerations persuaded him that it was well situated for the system of petty warfare which he meditated, and induced him to remain there. It was protected by forests and rugged heights. All approach from the seaboard was rendered difficult and dangerous to a hostile force by a chain of sharp hills, extending from Pluckamin, by Boundbrook and Springfield, to the vicinity of the Passaic River, while various defiles in the rear afforded safer retreats into a fertile and well-peopled region.* It was nearly equidistant from Amboy, Newark, and Brunswick, the principal posts of the enemy; so that any movement made from them could be met by a counter movement on his part; while the forays and skirmishes by which he might harass them, would school and season his own troops. He had three faithful generals with him: Greene, his reliance on all occasions; swarthy Sullivan, whose excitable temper and quick sensibilities he had sometimes to keep in check by friendly counsels and rebukes, but

* Wilkinson's *Memoirs*, vol. i., p. 149.

who was a good officer, and loyally attached to him; and brave, genial, generous Knox, never so happy as when by his side. He had lately been advanced to the rank of brigadier at his recommendation, and commanded the artillery.

Washington's military family at this time was composed of his aides-de-camp, Colonels Meade and Tench Tilghman of Philadelphia, gentlemen of gallant spirit, amiable tempers, and cultivated manners; and his secretary, Colonel Robert H. Harrison of Maryland—the "old secretary," as he was familiarly called among his associates, and by whom he was described as "one in whom every man had confidence, and by whom no man was deceived."

Washington's headquarters at first were in what was called the Freemason's Tavern, on the north side of the village green. His troops were encamped about the vicinity of the village, at first in tents, until they could build log huts for shelter against the winter's cold. The main encampment was near Bottle Hill, in a sheltered valley which was thickly wooded, and had abundant springs. It extended southeasterly from Morristown; and was called the Lowantica Valley, from the Indian name of a beautiful, limpid brook which ran through it, and lost itself in a great swamp. *

* Notes of the Rev. Joseph F. Tuttle, MS.

The enemy being now concentrated at New Brunswick and Amboy, General Putnam was ordered by Washington to move from Crosswicks to Princeton, with the troops under his command. He was instructed to draw his forage as much as possible from the neighborhood of Brunswick, about eighteen miles off, thereby contributing to distress the enemy; to have good scouting parties continually on the look-out; to keep nothing with him but what could be moved off at a moment's warning, and, if compelled to leave Princeton, to retreat towards the mountains, so as to form a junction with the forces at Morristown.

Putnam had with him but a few hundred men. "You will give out your strength to be twice as great as it is," writes Washington; a common expedient with him in those times of scanty means. Putnam acted up to the advice. A British officer, Captain Macpherson, was lying desperately wounded at Princeton, and Putnam, in the kindness of his heart, was induced to send in a flag to Brunswick in quest of a friend and military comrade of the dying man, to attend him in his last moments and make his will. To prevent the weakness of the garrison from being discovered, the visitor was brought in after dark. Lights gleamed in all the college windows, and in the vacant houses

about the town ; the handful of troops capable of duty were marched hither and thither, and backward and forward, and paraded about to such an effect, that the visitor on his return to the British camp, reported the force under the old general to be at least five thousand strong. *

Cantonments were gradually formed between Princeton and the Highlands of the Hudson, which made the left flank of Washington's position, and where General Heath had command. General Philemon Dickinson, who commanded the New Jersey militia, was stationed on the west side of Millstone River, near Somerset Court-house, one of the nearest posts to the enemy's camp at Brunswick. A British foraging party, of five or six hundred strong, sent out by Cornwallis with forty wagons and upward of a hundred draught horses, mostly of the English breed, having collected sheep and cattle about the country, were sacking a mill on the opposite side of the river, where a large quantity of flour was deposited. While thus employed, Dickinson set upon them with a force equal in number, but composed of raw militia and fifty Philadelphia riflemen. He dashed through the river, waist deep, with his men, and charged the enemy so suddenly and vigorously, that, though supported by three

* Sparks' *Am. Biography*, vol. vii., p. 196.

field-pieces, they gave way, left their convoy, and retreated so precipitately, that he made only nine prisoners. A number of killed and wounded were carried off by the fugitives on light wagons.*

These exploits of the militia were noticed with high encomiums by Washington, while at the same time he was rigid in prohibiting and punishing the excesses into which men are apt to run when suddenly clothed with military power. Such is the spirit of a general order issued at this time. "The general prohibits, in both the militia and continental troops, the infamous practice of plundering the inhabitants under the specious pretense of their being tories. . . . It is our business to give protection and support to the poor distressed inhabitants, not to multiply and increase their calamities." After the publication of this order, all excesses of this kind were to be punished in the severest manner.

To counteract the proclamation of the British commissioners, promising amnesty to all in rebellion who should, in a given time, return to their allegiance, Washington now issued a counter proclamation (Jan. 25th), commanding every person who had subscribed a declaration

* Washington to the President of Congress. Also note to Sparks, vol. iv., p. 290.

of fidelity to Great Britain, or taken an oath of allegiance, to repair within thirty days to headquarters, or the quarters to the nearest general officer of the continental army or of the militia, and there take the oath of allegiance to the United States of America, and give up any protection, certificate, or passport he might have received from the enemy; at the same time granting full liberty to all such as preferred the interest and protection of Great Britain to the freedom and happiness of their country, forthwith to withdraw themselves and families within the enemy's lines. All who should neglect or refuse to comply with this order were to be considered adherents to the crown, and treated as common enemies.

This measure met with objections at the time, some of the timid or over-cautious thinking it inexpedient; others, jealous of the extraordinary powers vested in Washington, questioning whether he had not transcended these powers and exercised a degree of despotism.

The small-pox, which had been fatally prevalent in the preceding year, had again broken out, and Washington feared it might spread through the whole army. He took advantage of the interval of comparative quiet to have his troops inoculated. Houses were set apart

in various places as hospitals for inoculation, and a church was appropriated for the use of those who had taken the malady in the natural way. Among these the ravages were frightful. The traditions of the place and neighborhood give lamentable pictures of the distress caused by this loathsome disease in the camp and in the villages, wherever it had not been parried by inoculation.

"Washington," we are told, "was not an unmoved spectator of the griefs around him, and might be seen in Hanover and in Lowantica Valley, cheering the faith and inspiring the courage of his suffering men."* It was this paternal care and sympathy which attached his troops personally to him. They saw that he regarded them, not with the eye of a general, but of a patriot, whose heart yearned towards them as countrymen suffering in one common cause.

A striking contrast was offered throughout the winter and spring, between the rival commanders, Howe at New York, and Washington at Morristown. Howe was a soldier by profession. War, with him, was a career. The camp was, for the time, country and home. Easy and indolent by nature, of convivial and luxurious habits, and somewhat addicted to

* Notes of the Rev. Joseph F. Tuttle, MS.

gaming, he found himself in good quarters at New York, and was in no hurry to leave them. The tories rallied around him. The British merchants residing there regarded him with profound devotion. His officers, too, many of them young men of rank and fortune, gave a gayety and brilliancy to the place; and the wealthy royalists forgot in a round of dinners, balls, and assemblies, the hysterical alarms they had once experienced under the military sway of Lee.

Washington, on the contrary, was a patriot soldier, grave, earnest, thoughtful, self-sacrificing. War, to him, was a painful remedy, hateful in itself, but adopted for a great national good. To the prosecution of it all his pleasures, his comforts, his natural inclinations and private interests were sacrificed; and his chosen officers were earnest and anxious like himself, with their whole thoughts directed to the success of the magnanimous struggle in which they were engaged.

So, too, the armies were contrasted. The British troops, many of them, perchance, slightly metamorphosed from vagabonds into soldiers, all mere men of the sword, were well clad, well housed, and surrounded by all the conveniences of a thoroughly appointed army with a "rebel country" to forage. The Ameri-

can troops for the most part were mere yeomanry, taken from their rural homes; ill sheltered, ill clad, ill fed, and ill paid, with nothing to reconcile them to their hardships but love for the soil they were defending, and the inspiring thought that it was *their country*. Washington, with paternal care, endeavored to protect them from the depraving influences of the camp. "Let vice and immorality of every kind be discouraged as much as possible in your brigade," writes he in a circular to his brigadier-generals; "and, as a chaplain is allowed to each regiment, see that the men regularly attend divine worship. Gaming of every kind is expressly forbidden, as being the foundation of evil, and the cause of many a brave and gallant officer's ruin."

Chapter V.

Negotiations for Exchange of Prisoners—Case of Colonel Ethan Allen—Of General Lee—Correspondence of Washington with Sir William Howe about the Exchanges of Prisoners—Referees Appointed—Letters of Lee from New York—Case of Colonel Campbell—Washington's Advice to Congress on the Subject of Retaliation—His Correspondence with Lord Howe about the Treatment of Prisoners—The Horrors of the Jersey Prison-Ship and the Sugar-House.

A CARTEL for the exchange of prisoners had been a subject of negotiation previous to the affair of Trenton, without being adjusted. The British commanders were slow to recognize the claims to equality of those they considered rebels; Washington was tenacious in holding them up as patriots ennobled by their cause.

Among the cases which came up for attention was that of Ethan Allen, the brave but eccentric captor of Ticonderoga. His daring attempts

in the "path of renown" had cost him a world of hardships. Thrown into irons as a felon, threatened with a halter, carried to England to be tried for treason, confined in Pendennis Castle, re-transported to Halifax, and now a prisoner in New York. "I have suffered everything short of death," writes he to the Assembly of his native State, Connecticut. He had, however, recovered health and suppleness of limb, and with them all his swelling rhetoric. "I am fired," writes he, "with adequate indignation to revenge both my own and my country's wrongs. I am experimentally certain I have fortitude sufficient to face the invaders of America in the place of danger, spread with all the horrors of war." And he concludes with one of his magniloquent, but really sincere expressions of patriotism: "Provided you can hit upon some measure to procure my liberty, I will appropriate my remaining days, and freely hazard my life in the service of the colony, and maintaining the American Empire. I thought to have enrolled my name in the list of illustrious American heroes, but was nipped in the bud!"

Honest Ethan Allen! his name will ever stand enrolled on that list; not illustrious, perhaps, but eminently popular.

His appeal to his native State had produced

an appeal to Congress, and Washington had been instructed, considering his long imprisonment, to urge his exchange. This had scarce been urged, when tidings of the capture of General Lee presented a case of still greater importance to be provided for. "I feel much for his misfortune," writes Washington, "and am sensible that in his captivity our country has lost a warm friend and an able officer." By direction of Congress, he had sent in a flag to inquire about Lee's treatment, and to convey him a sum of money. This was just previous to the second crossing of the Delaware.

Lee was now reported to be in rigorous confinement in New York, and treated with harshness and indignity. The British professed to consider him a deserter, he having been a lieutenant-colonel in their service, although he alleged that he had resigned his commission before joining the American army. Two letters which he addressed to General Howe, were returned to him unopened, inclosed in a cover directed to *Lieutenant-Colonel Lee.*

On the 13th of January, Washington addressed the following letter to Sir William Howe. "I am directed by Congress to propose an exchange of five of the Hessian field-officers taken at Trenton for Major-General Lee; or if this proposal should not be accepted, to demand

his liberty upon parole, within certain bounds, as has ever been granted to your officers in our custody. I am informed, upon good authority, that your reason for keeping him hitherto in stricter confinement than usual is, that you do not look upon him in the light of a common prisoner of war, but as a deserter from the British service, as his resignation has never been accepted, and that you intend to try him as such by a court-martial. I will not undertake to determine how far this doctrine may be justifiable among yourselves, but I must give you warning that Major-General Lee is looked upon as an officer belonging to, and under the protection of the United Independent States of America, and that any violence you may commit upon his life and liberty, will be severely retaliated upon the lives or liberties of the British officers, or those of their foreign allies in our hands."

In this letter he likewise adverted to the treatment of American prisoners in New York; several who had recently been released, having given the most shocking account of the barbarities they had experienced, "which their miserable, emaciated countenances confirmed."—"I would beg," added he, "that some certain rule of conduct towards prisoners may be settled; and, if you are determined to

make captivity as distressing as possible, let me know it, that we may be upon equal terms, for your conduct shall regulate mine."

Sir William, in reply, proposed to send an officer of rank to Washington, to confer upon a mode of exchange and subsistence of prisoners. "This expedient," observes he, "appearing to me effectual for settling all differences, will, I hope, be the means of preventing a repetition of the improper terms in which your letter is expressed and founded on the grossest misrepresentations. I shall not make any further comment upon it, than to assure you, that your threats of retaliating upon the innocent such punishment as may be decreed in the circumstances of Mr. Lee by the laws of his country, will not divert me from my duty in any respect; at the same time, you may rest satisfied that the proceedings against him will not be precipitated; and I trust that, in this, or in any other event in the course of my command, you will not have just cause to accuse me of inhumanity, prejudice, or passion."

Sir William, in truth, was greatly perplexed with respect to Lee, and had written to England to Lord George Germaine for instructions in the case. "General Lee," writes he, "being considered in the light of a deserter, is kept a close prisoner; but I do not bring him to

trial, as a doubt has arisen, whether, by a public resignation of his half-pay prior to his entry into the rebel army, he was amenable to the military law as a deserter."

The proposal of Sir William, that all disputed points relative to the exchange and subsistence of prisoners should be adjusted by referees, led to the appointment of two officers for the purpose; Colonel Walcott by General Howe, and Colonel Harrison, "the old secretary," by Washington. In the contemplated exchanges was that of one of the Hessian field-officers for Colonel Ethan Allen.

The haughty spirit of Lee had experienced a severe humiliation in the late catastrophe; his pungent and caustic humor is at an end. In a letter addressed shortly afterwards to Washington, and inclosing one to Congress which Lord and General Howe had permitted him to send, he writes, "as the contents are of the last importance to me, and perhaps not less so to the community, I most earnestly entreat, my dear general, that you will despatch it immediately, and order the Congress to be as expeditious as possible."

The letter contained a request that two or three gentlemen might be sent immediately to New York, to whom he would communicate what he conceived to be of the greatest impor-

tance. "If my own interests were alone at stake," writes he, "I flatter myself that the Congress would not hesitate a single instant in acquiescing in my request; but this is far from the case; the interests of the public are equally concerned. . . . Lord and General Howe will grant a safe conduct to the gentlemen deputed."

The letter having been read in Congress, Washington was directed to inform General Lee that they were pursuing and would continue to pursue every means in their power to provide for his personal safety, and to obtain his liberty; but that they considered it improper to send any of their body to communicate with him, and could not perceive how it would tend to his advantage or the interest of the public.

Lee repeated his request, but with no better success. He felt this refusal deeply; as a brief, sad note to Washington indicates.

"It is a most unfortunate circumstance for myself, and I think not less so for the public, that Congress have not thought proper to comply with my request. It could not possibly have been attended with any ill consequences, and might with good ones. At least it was an indulgence which I thought my situ-

ation entitled me to. But I am unfortunate in everything, and this stroke is the severest I have yet experienced. God send you a different fate. Adieu, my dear general.

"Yours most truly and affectionately,

"CHARLES LEE."

How different from the humorous, satirical, self-confident tone of his former letters. Yet Lee's actual treatment was not so harsh as had been represented. He was in close confinement, it is true; but three rooms had been fitted up for his reception in the Old City Hall of New York, having nothing of the look of a prison excepting that they were secured by bolts and bars.

Congress, in the meantime, had resorted to their threatened measure of retaliation. On the 20th of February, they had resolved that the Board of War be directed immediately to order the five Hessian field-officers and Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell into safe and close custody, "it being the unalterable resolution of Congress to retaliate on them the same punishment as may be inflicted on the person of General Lee."

The Colonel Campbell here mentioned had commanded one of General Fraser's battalions of Highlanders, and had been captured on

board of a transport in Nantasket road, in the preceding summer. He was a member of Parliament, and a gentleman of fortune. Retaliation was carried to excess in regard to him, for he was thrown into the common jail at Concord in Massachusetts.

From his prison he made an appeal to Washington, which at once touched his quick sense of justice. He immediately wrote to the council of Massachusetts Bay, quoting the words of the resolution of Congress. "By this you will observe," adds he, "that *exactly the same treatment* is to be shown to Colonel Campbell and the Hessian officers, that General Howe shows to General Lee, and as he is only confined to a commodious house with genteel accommodations, we have no right or reason to be more severe on Colonel Campbell, who I would wish should upon the receipt of this be removed from his present situation, and be put into a house where he may live comfortably."

In a letter to the President of Congress on the following day, he gives his moderating counsels on the whole subject of retaliation. "Though I sincerely commiserate," writes he, "the misfortunes of General Lee, and feel much for his present unhappy situation, yet with all possible deference to the opinion of Congress, I fear that these resolutions will not

have the desired effect, are founded on impolicy, and will, if adhered to, produce consequences of an extensive and melancholy nature." . . .

"The balance of prisoners is greatly against us, and a general regard to the happiness of the whole should mark our conduct. Can we imagine that our enemies will not mete the same punishments, the same indignities, the same cruelties, to those belonging to us, in their possession, that we impose on theirs in our power? Why should we suppose them to possess more humanity than we have ourselves? Or why should an ineffectual attempt to relieve the distresses of one brave, unfortunate man, involve many more in the same calamities? . . . Suppose," continues he, "the treatment prescribed for the Hessians should be pursued, will it not establish what the enemy have been aiming to effect by every artifice and the grossest misrepresentations, I mean an opinion of our enmity towards them, and of the cruel treatment they experience, when they fall into our hands, a prejudice which we on our part have heretofore thought it politic to suppress, and to root out by every act of lenity and of kindness?"

"Many more objections," added he, "might be subjoined, were they material. I shall only

observe, that the present state of the army, if it deserves that name, will not authorize the language of retaliation, or the style of menace. This will be conceded by all who know that the whole of our force is weak and trifling, and composed of militia (very few regular troops excepted) whose service is on the eve of expiring."

In a letter to Mr. Robert Morris also, he writes: "I wish, with all my heart, that Congress had gratified General Lee in his request. If not too late I wish they would do it still. I can see no possible evil that can result from it; some good, I think, might. The request to see a gentleman or two came from the *general*, not from the commissioners; there could have been no harm, therefore, in hearing what *he* had to say on *any* subject, especially as he had declared that his own personal interest was deeply concerned. The resolve to put in close confinement Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell and the Hessian field-officers, in order to retaliate upon them General Lee's punishment, is, in my opinion, injurious in every point of view, and must have been entered into without due attention to the consequences. . . . If the resolve of Congress respecting General Lee strikes you in the same point of view it has done me, I could wish you would

signify as much to that body, as I really think it fraught with every evil."

Washington was not always successful in instilling his wise moderation into public councils. Congress adhered to their vindictive policy, merely directing that no other hardships should be inflicted on the captive officers, than such confinement as was necessary to carry their resolve into effect. As to their refusal to grant the request of Lee, Robert Morris surmised they were fearful of the injurious effect that might be produced in the court of France, should it be reported that members of Congress visited General Lee, by permission of the British commissioners. There were other circumstances beside the treatment of General Lee, to produce this indignant sensibility on the part of Congress. Accounts were rife at this juncture, of the cruelties and indignities almost invariably experienced by American prisoners at New York; and an active correspondence on the subject was going on between Washington and the British commanders, at the same time, with that regarding General Lee.

The captive Americans who had been in the naval service were said to be confined, officers and men, in prison-ships, which from their loathsome condition, and the horrors and suf-

ferings of all kinds experienced on board of them, had acquired the appellation of *floating hells*. Those who had been in the land service, were crowded into jails and dungeons like the vilest malefactors; and were represented as pining in cold, in filth, in hunger and nakedness.

"Our poor devoted soldiers," writes an eyewitness, "were scantily supplied with provisions of bad quality, wretchedly clothed, and destitute of sufficient fuel, if indeed they had any. Disease was the inevitable consequence, and their prisons soon became hospitals. A fatal malady was generated, and the mortality, to every heart not steeled by the spirit of party, was truly deplorable." * According to popular account, the prisoners confined on shipboard, and on shore, were perishing by hundreds.

A statement made by Captain Gamble, recently confined on board of a prison-ship, had especially roused the ire of Congress, and by their directions had produced a letter from Washington to Lord Howe. "I am sorry," writes he, "that I am under the disagreeable necessity of troubling your lordship with a letter, almost wholly on the subject of the cruel treatment which our officers and men in the

* Graydon's *Memoirs*, p. 232.

naval department, who are unhappy enough to fall into your hands, receive on board the prison-ships in the harbor of New York." After specifying the case of Captain Gamble, and adding a few particulars, he proceeds: "From the opinion I have been taught to entertain of your lordship's humanity, I will not suppose that you are privy to proceedings of so cruel and unjustifiable a nature; and I hope, that, upon making the proper inquiry, you will have the matter so regulated, that the unhappy persons whose lot is captivity, may not in future have the miseries of cold, disease, and famine, added to their other misfortunes. You may call us rebels, and say that we deserve no better treatment; but remember, my lord, that, supposing us rebels, we still have feelings as keen and sensible as loyalists, and will, if forced to it, most assuredly retaliate upon those upon whom we look as the unjust invaders of our rights, liberties, and properties. I should not have said thus much, but my injured countrymen have long called upon me to endeavor to obtain a redress of their grievances, and I should think myself as culpable as those who inflict such severities upon them, were I to continue silent," etc.

Lord Howe, in reply (January 17), expressed himself surprised at the matter and language

of Washington's letter, "so different from the liberal vein of sentiment he had been habituated to expect on every occasion of personal intercourse or correspondence with him." He was surprised, too, that "the idle and unnatural report" of Captain Gamble, respecting the dead and dying, and the neglect of precautions against infection, should meet with any credit. "Attention to preserve the lives of these men," writes he, "whom we esteem the misled subjects of the king, is a duty as binding on us, where we are able from circumstances to execute it with effect, as any you can plead for the interest you profess in their welfare."

He denied that prisoners were ill treated in his particular department (the naval). They had been allowed the general liberty of the prison-ship, until a successful attempt of some to escape, had rendered it necessary to restrain the rest within such limits as left the commanding parts of the ship in possession of the guard. They had the same provisions in quality and quantity that were furnished to the seamen of his own ship. The want of cleanliness was the result of their own indolence and neglect. In regard to health, they had the constant attendance of an American surgeon, a fellow-prisoner; who was furnished

with medicines from the king's stores; and the visits of the physician of the fleet.

"As I abhor every imputation of wanton cruelty in multiplying the miseries of the wretched," observes his lordship, "or of treating them with needless severity, I have taken the trouble to state these several facts."

In regard to the hint at retaliation, he leaves it to Washington to act therein as he should think fit; but adds he grandly, "the innocent at my disposal will not have any severities to apprehend from me on that account."

We have quoted this correspondence the more freely, because it is on a subject deeply worn into the American mind; and about which we have heard too many particulars, from childhood upwards, from persons of unquestionable veracity, who suffered in the cause, to permit us to doubt about the fact. The *Jersey Prison-ship* is proverbial in our Revolutionary history; and the bones of the unfortunate patriots who perished on board, form a monument on the Long Island shore. The horrors of the *Sugar-house* converted into a prison, are traditional in New York; and the brutal tyranny of Cunningham, the provost-marshal, over men of worth confined in the common jail, for the sin of patriotism, has been handed down from generation to generation.

That Lord Howe and Sir William were ignorant of the extent of these atrocities we really believe, but it was their duty to be well informed. War is, at best, a cruel trade, that habituates those who follow it to regard the sufferings of others with indifference. There is not a doubt, too, that a feeling of contumely deprived the patriot prisoners of all sympathy in the early stages of the Revolution. They were regarded as criminals rather than captives. The stigma of *rebels* seemed to take from them all the indulgences, scanty and miserable as they are, usually granted to prisoners of war. The British officers looked down with haughty contempt upon the American officers, who had fallen into their hands. The British soldiery treated them with insolent scurrility. It seemed as if the very ties of consanguinity rendered their hostility more intolerant, for it was observed that American prisoners were better treated by the Hessians than by the British. It was not until our countrymen had made themselves formidable by their successes that they were treated, when prisoners, with common decency and humanity.

The difficulties arising out of the case of General Lee interrupted the operations with regard to the exchange of prisoners; and gallant men, on both sides, suffered prolonged de-

tention in consequence; and among the number the brave, but ill-starred Ethan Allen.

Lee, in the meantime, remained in confinement, until directions with regard to him should be received from government. Events, however, had diminished his importance in the eyes of the enemy; he was no longer considered the American palladium. "As the capture of the Hessians and the manœuvres against the British took place after the surprise of General Lee," observes a London writer of the day, "we find that he is not the only efficient officer in the American service." *

* *Am. Archives*, 5th Series, iii., 1244.

Chapter VII.

Exertions to Form a New Army—Calls on the Different States—Insufficiency of the Militia—Washington's Care for the Yeomanry—Dangers in the Northern Department—Winter Attack on Ticonderoga Apprehended—Exertions to Reinforce Schuyler—Precarious State of Washington's Army—Conjectures as to the Designs of the Enemy—Expedition of the British against Peekskill.

THE early part of the year brought the annual embarrassments caused by short enlistments. The brief terms of service for which the continental soldiery had enlisted, a few months perhaps, at most a year, were expiring; and the men, glad to be released from camp duty, were hastening to their rustic homes. Militia had to be the dependence until a new army could be raised and organized; and Washington called on the Council of Safety of Pennsylvania, speedily to furnish temporary reinforcements of the kind.

All his officers that could be spared were

ordered away, some to recruit, some to collect the scattered men of the different regiments, who were dispersed, he said, almost over the continent. General Knox was sent off to Massachusetts to expedite the raising of a battalion of artillery. Different States were urged to levy and equip their quotas for the continental army. "Nothing but the united efforts of every State in America," writes he, "can save us from disgrace, and probably from ruin."

Rhode Island is reproached with raising troops for home service before furnishing its supply to the general army. "If each State," writes he, "were to prepare for its own defense independent of each other, they would all be conquered, one by one. *Our success must depend on a firm union and a strict adherence to the general plan.*" *

He deplores the fluctuating state of the army while depending on militia; full one day, almost disbanded the next. "I am much afraid that the enemy, one day or other, taking advantage of one of these temporary weaknesses, will make themselves masters of our magazines of stores, arms, and artillery."

The militia, too, on being dismissed, were generally suffered by their officers to carry home with them the arms with which they had

* Letter to Governor Cooke. Sparks, iv., 285.

been furnished, so that the armory was in a manner scattered over all the world, and forever lost to the public.

Then an earnest word is spoken by him in behalf of the yeomanry, whose welfare always lay near his heart. "You must be fully sensible," writes he, "of the hardships imposed upon individuals, and how detrimental it must be to the public to have farmers and tradesmen frequently called out of the field as militia men, whereby a total stop is put to arts and agriculture, without which we cannot long subsist."

While thus anxiously exerting himself to strengthen his own precarious army, the security of the Northern department was urged upon his attention. Schuyler represented it as in need of reinforcements and supplies of all kinds. He apprehended that Carleton might make an attack upon Ticonderoga, as soon as he could cross Lake Champlain on the ice; that important fortress was under the command of a brave officer, Colonel Anthony Wayne, but its garrison had dwindled down to six or seven hundred men, chiefly New England militia. In the present destitute situation of his department as to troops, Schuyler feared that Carleton might not only succeed in an attempt on Ticonderoga, but might push his way to Albany.

He had written in vain, he said, to the Convention of New York, and to the Eastern States, for reinforcements, and he entreated Washington to aid him with his influence. He wished to have his army composed of troops from as many different States as possible; the Southern people having a greater spirit of discipline and subordination, might, he thought, introduce it among the Eastern people.

He wished also for the assistance of a general officer or two in his department. "I am alone," writes he, "distracted with a variety of cares, and no one to take part of the burden." *

Although Washington considered a winter attack of the kind specified by Schuyler too difficult and dangerous to be very probable, he urged reinforcements from Massachusetts and New Hampshire, whence they could be furnished most speedily. Massachusetts, in fact, had already determined to send four regiments to Schuyler's aid as soon as possible.

Washington disapproved of a mixture of troops in the present critical juncture, knowing, he said, "the difficulty of maintaining harmony among men from different States, and bringing them to lay aside all attachments and distinctions of a local and provincial nature, and *consider themselves the same people, engaged in*

* Schuyler's Letter Book, MS.

the same noble struggle, and having one general interest to defend." *

The quota of Massachusetts, under the present arrangement of the army, was fifteen regiments; and Washington ordered General Heath, who was in Massachusetts, to forward them to Ticonderoga as fast as they could be raised. †

Notwithstanding all Washington's exertions in behalf of the army under his immediate command, it continued to be deplorably in want of reinforcements, and it was necessary to maintain the utmost vigilance at all his posts to prevent his camp from being surprised. The operations of the enemy might be delayed by the bad condition of the roads, and the want of horses to move their artillery, but he anticipated an attack as soon as the roads were passable, and apprehended a disastrous result unless speedily reinforced.

"The enemy," writes he, "must be ignorant of our numbers and situation, or they would never suffer us to remain unmolested, and I almost tax myself with imprudence in committing the fact to paper, lest this letter should fall into other hands than those for which it is intended." And again: "It is not in my

* Ibid.

† Sparks. *Washington's Writings*, iv., 361, note.

power to make Congress fully sensible of the real situation of our affairs, and that it is with difficulty I can keep the life and soul of the army together. In a word, they are at a distance; they think it is but to say *presto, begone*, and everything is done; they seem not to have any conception of the difficulty and perplexity of those who have to execute."

The designs of the enemy being mere matter of conjecture, measures varied accordingly. As the season advanced, Washington was led to believe that Philadelphia would be their first object at the opening of the campaign, and that they would bring round all their troops from Canada by water to aid in the enterprise. Under this persuasion he wrote to General Heath, ordering him to send eight of the Massachusetts battalions to Peekskill instead of Ticonderoga, and he explained his reasons for so doing in a letter to Schuyler. "At Peekskill," he observed, "they would be well placed to give support to any of the Eastern or Middle States; or to oppose the enemy, should they design to penetrate the country up the Hudson; or to cover New England, should they invade it. Should they move westward, the Eastern and Southern troops could easily form a junction, and this, besides, would oblige the enemy to leave a

much stronger garrison at New York. Even should the enemy pursue their first plan of an invasion from Canada, the troops at Peekskill would not be badly placed to reinforce Ticonderoga, and cover the country around Albany." "I am very sure," concludes he, "the operations of this army will in a great degree govern the motions of that in Canada. *If this is held at bay, curbed and confined, the Northern army will not dare attempt to penetrate.*" The last sentence will be found to contain the policy which governed Washington's personal movements throughout the campaign.

On the 18th of March he despatched General Greene to Philadelphia, to lay before Congress such matters as he could not venture to communicate by letter. "He is an able and good officer," writes he, "who has my entire confidence, and is intimately acquainted with my ideas."

Greene had scarce departed when the enemy began to give signs of life. The delay in the arrival of artillery, more than his natural indolence, had kept General Howe from formally taking the field; he now made preparations for the next campaign by detaching troops to destroy the American deposits of military stores. One of the chief of these was at Peekskill, the very place where Washington had

directed Heath to send troops from Massachusetts; and which he thought of making a central point of assemblage. Howe terms it "the port of that rough and mountainous tract called the Manor of Courtlandt." Brigadier-General McDougall had the command of it in the absence of General Heath, but his force did not exceed two hundred and fifty men.

As soon as the Hudson was clear of ice, a squadron of vessels of war and transports, with five hundred troops under Colonel Bird, ascended the river. McDougall had intelligence of the intended attack, and while the ships were making their way across the Tappan Sea and Haverstraw Bay, exerted himself to remove as much as possible of the provisions and stores to Forts Montgomery and Constitution in the Highlands. On the morning of the 23d, the whole squadron came to anchor in Peekskill Bay; and five hundred men landed in Lent's Cove, on the south side of the bay, whence they pushed forward with four light field-pieces drawn by sailors. On their approach, McDougall set fire to the barracks and principal storehouses, and retreated about two miles to a strong post, commanding the entrance to the Highlands, and the road to Continental Village, the place of the deposits.

It was the post that had been noted by Washington in the preceding year, where a small force could make a stand, and hurl down masses of rock on their assailants. Hence McDougall sent an express to Lieutenant-Colonel Marinus Willet, who had charge of Fort Constitution, to hasten to his assistance.

The British, finding the wharf in flames where they had intended to embark their spoils, completed the conflagration, beside destroying several small craft laden with provisions. They kept possession of the place until the following day, when a scouting party, which had advanced towards the entrance of the Highlands, was encountered by Colonel Marinus Willet with a detachment from Fort Constitution, and driven back to the main body after a sharp skirmish, in which nine of the marauders were killed. Four more were slain on the banks of Canopas Creek as they were setting fire to some boats. The enemy were disappointed in the hope of carrying off a great deal of booty, and finding the country around was getting under arms, they contented themselves with the mischief they had done, and re-embarked in the evening by moonlight, when the whole squadron swept down the Hudson.

Chapter VII.

Schuyler's Affairs in the Northern Department—Misunderstandings with Congress—Gives Offense by a Reproachful Letter—Office of Adjutant-General Offered to Gates—Declined by him—Schuyler Reprimanded by Congress for his Reproachful Letter—Gates Appointed to the Command at Ticonderoga—Schuyler Considers Himself Virtually Suspended—Takes his Seat as a Delegate to Congress, and Claims a Court of Inquiry—Has Command at Philadelphia.

WE have now to enter upon a tissue of circumstances connected with the Northern department, which will be found materially to influence the course of affairs in that quarter throughout the current year, and ultimately to be fruitful of annoyance to Washington himself. To make these more clear to the reader, it is necessary to revert to events in the preceding year.

The question of command between Schuyler

and Gates, when settled as we have shown by Congress, had caused no interruption to the harmony of intercourse between these generals.

Schuyler directed the affairs of the department with energy and activity from his headquarters at Albany, where they had been fixed by Congress, while Gates, subordinate to him, commanded the post of Ticonderoga.

The disappointment of an independent command, however, still rankled in the mind of the latter, and was kept alive by the officious suggestions of meddling friends. In the course of the autumn, his hopes in this respect revived. Schuyler was again disgusted with the service. In the discharge of his various and harassing duties, he had been annoyed by sectional jealousies and ill will. His motives and measures had been maligned. The failures in Canada had been attributed to him, and he had repeatedly entreated Congress to order an inquiry into the many charges made against him, "that he might not any longer be insulted."

"I assure you," writes he to Gates, on the 25th of August, "that I am so sincerely tired of abuse, that I will let my enemies arrive at the completion of their wishes by retiring, as soon as I shall have been tried; and attempt to serve my injured country in some other way,

where envy and detraction will have no temptation to follow me."

On the 14th of September, he actually offered his resignation of his commission as major-general, and of every other office and appointment; still claiming a court of inquiry on his conduct, and expressing his determination to fulfil the duties of a good citizen, and promote the weal of his native country, but in some other capacity. "I trust," writes he, "that my successor, whoever he may be, will find that matters are as prosperously arranged in this department as the nature of the service will admit. I shall most readily give him any information and assistance in my power."

He immediately wrote to General Gates, apprising him of his having sent in his resignation. "It is much to be lamented," writes he, "that calumny is so much cherished in this unhappy country, and that so few of the servants of the public escape the malevolence of a set of insidious miscreants. It has driven me to the necessity of resigning."

As the command of the department, should his resignation be accepted, would of course devolve on Gates, he assures him he will render every assistance in his power to any officer whom Gates might appoint to command in Albany.

All his letters to Gates, while they were thus in relation to the department, had been kind and courteous; beginning with, "My dear General," and ending with "adieu" and "every friendly wish." Schuyler was a warm-hearted man, and his expressions were probably sincere.

The hopes of Gates, inspired by this proffered resignation, were doomed to be again overclouded. Schuyler was informed by President Hancock, "that Congress, during the present state of affairs, could not consent to accept of his resignation: but requested that he would continue in the command he held, and be assured that the aspersions thrown out by his enemies against his character, had no influence upon the minds of the members of that House; and that more effectually to put calumny to silence, they would at an early day appoint a committee to inquire fully into his conduct, which they trusted would establish his reputation in the opinion of all good men."

Schuyler received the resolve of Congress with grim acquiescence, but showed in his reply that he was but half soothed. "At this very critical juncture," writes he, October 16th, "I shall waive those remarks which in justice to myself, I must make at a future day. The calumny of my enemies has arisen to its height.

Their malice is incapable of heightening the injury. . . . In the alarming situation of our affairs, I shall continue to act some time longer, but Congress must prepare to put the care of this department into other hands. I shall be able to render my country better services in another line: less exposed to a repetition of the injuries I have sustained."

He had remained at his post, therefore, discharging the various duties of his department with his usual zeal and activity; and Gates, at the end of the campaign, had repaired, as we have shown, to the vicinity of Congress, to attend the fluctuation of events.

Circumstances in the course of the winter had put the worthy Schuyler again on points of punctilio with Congress. Among some letters intercepted by the enemy and retaken by the Americans, was one from Colonel Joseph Trumbull, the commissary-general, insinuating that General Schuyler had secreted or suppressed a commission sent for his brother, Colonel John Trumbull, as deputy adjutant-general.* The purport of the letter was reported

* The reader may recollect that it was Commissary-General Trumbull who wrote the letter to Gates calculated to inflame his jealousy against Schuyler, when the question of command had risen between them. (See vol. iii., ch. xiii.)

to Schuyler. He spurned at the insinuation. "If it be true that he has asserted such a thing," writes he to the president, "I shall expect from Congress that justice which is due to me."

Three weeks later he inclosed to the president a copy of Trumbull's letter. "I hope," writes he, "Congress will not entertain the least idea that I can tamely submit to such injurious treatment. I expect they will immediately do what is incumbent on them on the occasion. Until Mr. Trumbull and I are upon a footing, I cannot do what the laws of honor and a regard to my own reputation render indispensably necessary. Congress can put us on a par by dismissing one or the other from the service."

Congress failed to comply with the general's request. They added also to his chagrin by dismissing from the service an army physician, in whose appointment he had particularly interested himself.

Schuyler was a proud-spirited man, and, at times, somewhat irascible. In a letter to Congress on the 8th of February, he observed: "As Dr. Stringer had my recommendation to the office he has sustained, perhaps it was a compliment due to me that I should have been advised of the reason of his dismission."

And again: "I was in hopes some notice would have been taken of the odious suspicion contained in Mr. Commissary Trumbull's intercepted letter. I really feel myself deeply chagrined on the occasion. I am incapable of the meanness he suspects me of, and I confidently expected that Congress would have done me that justice which it was in their power to give, and which I humbly conceive they ought to have done."

This letter gave great umbrage to Congress, but no immediate answer was made to it.

About this time the office of adjutant-general, which had remained vacant ever since the resignation of Colonel Reed, to the great detriment of the service, especially now when a new army was to be formed, was offered to General Gates, who had formerly filled it with ability; and President Hancock informed him, by letter, of the earnest desire of Congress that he should resume it, retaining his present rank and pay.

Gates almost resented the proposal. "Unless the commander-in-chief earnestly makes the same request with your Excellency," replies he, "all my endeavors as adjutant-general would be vain and fruitless. I had, last year, the honor to command in the second post in America; and had the good fortune to pre-

vent the enemy from making their so much wished-for junction with General Howe. After this, to be expected to dwindle again to the adjutant-general, requires more philosophy on my part, and something more than words on yours." *

He wrote to Washington to the same effect, but declared that, should it be his Excellency's wish, he would resume the office with alacrity.

Washington promptly replied that he had often wished it in secret, though he had never even hinted at it, supposing Gates might have scruples on the subject. "You cannot conceive the pleasure I feel," adds he, "when you tell me that, if it is my desire that you should resume your former office, you will with cheerfulness and alacrity proceed to Morristown." He thanks him for this mark of attention to his wishes; assures him that he looks upon his resumption of the office as the only means of giving form and regularity to the new army; and will be glad to receive a line from him mentioning the time he would leave Philadelphia.

He received no such line. Gates had a higher object in view. A letter from Schuyler to Congress, had informed that body that he

* Gates's *Papers*. N. Y. H. Lib.

should set out for Philadelphia about the 21st of March, and should immediately on his arrival require the promised inquiry into his conduct. Gates, of course, was acquainted with this circumstance. He knew Schuyler had given offense to Congress; he knew that he had been offended on his own part, and had repeatedly talked of resigning. He had active friends in Congress ready to push his interests. On the 12th of March his letter to President Hancock about the proffered adjutancy was read, and ordered to be taken into consideration on the following day.

On the 13th, a committee of five was appointed to confer with him upon the general state of affairs.

On the 15th, the letter of General Schuyler of the 3d of February which had given such offense, was brought before the House, and it was resolved that his suggestion concerning the dismission of Dr. Stringer, was highly derogatory to the honor of Congress, and that it was expected his letters in future would be written in a style suitable to the dignity of the representative body of these free and independent States, and to his own character as their officer. His expressions, too, respecting the intercepted letter, that he had expected Congress would have done him all the justice

in their power, were pronounced, "to say the least, ill-advised and highly indecent." *

While Schuyler was thus in partial eclipse, the House proceeded to appoint a general officer for the Northern department, of which he had stated it to be in need.

On the 25th of March, Gates received the following note from President Hancock: "I have it in charge to direct that you repair to Ticonderoga immediately, and take command of the army stationed in that department."

Gates obeyed with alacrity. Again the vision of an independent command floated before his mind, and he was on his way to Albany, at the time that Schuyler, ignorant of this new arrangement, was journeying to Philadelphia. Gates was accompanied by Brigadier-General Fermois, a French officer, recently commissioned in the continental army. A rumor of his approach preceded him. "What are the terms on which Gates is coming on?" was asked in Albany. "Has Schuyler been superseded, or is he to be so, or has he resigned?" For a time all was rumor and conjecture. A report reached his family that he was to be divested of all titles and rank other than that of Philip Schuyler, Esquire. They heard it with joy, knowing the carking cares

* Journals of Congress.

and annoyances that had beset him in his command. His military friends deprecated it as a great loss to the service.*

When Gates arrived in Albany, Colonel Varick, Schuyler's secretary, waited on him with a message from Mrs. Schuyler, inviting him to take up his quarters at the general's house, which was in the vicinity. He declined, as the despatch of affairs required him to be continually in town; but took his breakfast with Mrs. Schuyler the next morning. He remained in Albany, unwilling to depart for Ticonderoga until there should be sufficient troops there to support him.

Schuyler arrived in Philadelphia in the second week in April, and found himself superseded in effect by General Gates in the Northern department. He inclosed to the committee of Albany the recent resolutions of Congress, passed before his arrival. "By these," writes he, "you will readily perceive that I shall not return a general. Under what influence it has been brought about, I am not at liberty now to mention. On my return to Albany, I shall give the committee the fullest information." †

Taking his seat in Congress as a delegate

* Letter of Colonel Richard Varick. Schuyler's Letter Book.

† Schuyler's Letter Book.

from New York, he demanded the promised investigation of his conduct during the time he had held a command in the army. It was his intention, when the scrutiny had taken place, to resign his commission, and retire from the service. On the 18th, a committee of inquiry was appointed, as at his request, composed of a member from each State.

In the meantime, as second major-general of the United States (Lee being the first), he held active command at Philadelphia, forming a camp on the western side of the Delaware, completing the works on Fort Island, throwing up works on Red Bank, and accelerating the despatch of troops and provisions to the commander-in-chief. During his sojourn at Philadelphia, also, he contributed essentially to reorganize the commissary department; digesting rules for its regulation, which were mainly adopted by Congress.

Chapter VIII.

Foreign Officers Candidates for Situations in the Army —Difficulties in Adjusting Questions of Rank— Ducoudray — Conway— Kosciuszko—Washington's Guards—Arnold Omitted in the Army Promotions —Washington Takes his Part—British Expeditions against Danbury—Destruction of American Stores —Connecticut Yeomanry in Arms—Skirmish at Ridgefield — Death of General Wooster—Gallant Services of Arnold—Rewarded by Congress—Exploit of Colonel Meigs at Sag Harbor.

THE fame of the American struggle for independence was bringing foreign officers as candidates for admission into the patriot army, and causing great embarrassment to the commander-in-chief. "They seldom," writes Washington, "bring more than a commission and a passport; which we know may belong to a bad as well as a good officer. Their ignorance of our language, and their inability to recruit men, are insurmountable obstacles to their being

engrafted in our continental battalions; for our officers, who have raised their men, and have served through the war upon pay that has not hitherto borne their expenses, would be disgusted if foreigners were put over their heads; and I assure you, few or none of these gentlemen look lower than field officers' commissions. . . . Some general mode of disposing of them must be adopted, for it is ungenerous to keep them in suspense, and a great charge to themselves; but I am at a loss to know how to point out this mode."

Congress determined that no foreign officers should receive commissions who were not well acquainted with the English language, and did not bring strong testimonials of their abilities. Still there was embarrassment. Some came with brevet commissions from the French government, and had been assured by Mr. Deane, American commissioner at Paris, that they would have the same rank in the American army. This would put them above American officers of merit and hard service, whose commissions were of more recent date. One Monsieur Ducoudray, on the strength of an agreement with Mr. Deane, expected to have the rank of major-general, and to be put at the head of the artillery. Washington deprecated the idea of intrusting a department on which

the very salvation of the army might depend, to a foreigner, who had no other tie to bind him to the interests of the country than honor; besides, he observed, it would endanger the loss to the service of General Knox, "a man of great military reading, sound judgment, and clear perceptions. He has conducted the affairs of that department with honor to himself and advantage to the public, and will resign if any one is put over him."

In fact, the report that Ducoudray was to be a major-general, with a commission dated in the preceding year, caused a commotion among the American officers of that rank, but whose commissions were of later date. Congress eventually determined not to ratify the contract entered into between Mr. Deane and Monsieur Decoudray, and resolved that the commissions of foreign officers received into the service, should bear date on the day of their being filled up by Washington.

Among the foreign candidates for appointments was one Colonel Conway, a native of Ireland, but who, according to his own account, had been thirty years in the service of France, and claimed to be a chevalier of the order of St. Louis, of which he wore the decoration. Mr. Deane had recommended him to Washington as an officer of merit, and had

written to Congress that he considered him well qualified for the office of adjutant or brigadier-general, and that he had given him reason to hope for one or the other of these appointments. Colonel Conway pushed for that of brigadier-general. It had been conferred some time before by Congress on two French officers, De Fermois and Deborre, who, he had observed, had been inferior to him in the French service, and it would be mortifying now to hold rank below them.

"I cannot pretend," writes Washington to the president, "to speak of Colonel Conway's merits or abilities of my own knowledge. He appears to be a man of candor, and, if he has been in service as long as he says, I should suppose him infinitely better qualified to serve us than many who have been promoted, as he speaks our language."

Conway accordingly received the rank of brigadier-general, of which he subsequently proved himself unworthy. He was boastful and presumptuous, and became noted for his intrigues, and for a despicable cabal against the commander-in-chief, which went by his name, and of which we shall have to speak hereafter.

A candidate of a different stamp had presented himself in the preceding year, the gal-

lant, generous-spirited, Thaddeus Kosciuszko. He was a Pole, of an ancient and noble family of Lithuania, and had been educated for the profession of arms at the military school at Warsaw, and subsequently in France. Disappointed in a love affair with a beautiful lady of rank with whom he had attempted to elope, he had emigrated to this country, and came provided with a letter of introduction from Dr. Franklin to Washington.

"What do you seek here?" inquired the commander-in-chief.

"To fight for American independence."

"What can you do?"

"Try me."

Washington was pleased with the curt, yet comprehensive reply, and with his chivalrous air and spirit, and at once received him into his family as an aide-de-camp.* Congress shortly afterwards appointed him an engineer, with the rank of colonel. He proved a valuable officer throughout the Revolution, and won an honorable and lasting name in our country.

Among the regiments which had been formed in the spring, one had been named by its officers "The Congress' Own," and another "General Washington's Life Guards." A

* *Foreign Quarterly Review*, vol. xv., p. 114.

resolve of Congress promptly appeared, pronouncing those appellations improper, and ordering that they should be discontinued. Washington's own modesty had already administered a corrective. In a letter to the President of Congress, he declared that the regiments had been so named without his consent or privity. "As soon as I heard of it," writes he, "I wrote to several of the officers in terms of severe reprehension, and expressly charged them to suppress the distinction, adding that all the battalions were on the same footing, and all under the general name of Continental." No man was less desirous for all individual distinctions of the kind.

Somewhat later he really formed a company for his guard. Colonel Alexander Spotswood had the selection of the men, four from each regiment; and was charged to be extremely cautious, "because," writes Washington, "it is more than probable that, in the course of the campaign, my baggage, papers, and other matters of great public import, may be committed to the sole care of these men." That the company might look well, and be nearly of a size, none were to be over five feet ten, nor under five feet nine inches in stature, and to be sober, young, active, and well-made, of good character, and proud of appearing clean

and soldier-like. As there would be a greater chance for fidelity among such as had family connections in the country, Spotswood was charged to send none but natives, and, if possible, men of some property. "I must insist," concludes Washington, "that, in making this choice, you give no intimation of my preference of natives, as I do not want to create any invidious distincton between them and the officers." *

Questions of rank among his generals, were, as we have repeatedly shown, perpetual sources of perplexity to Washington, and too often caused by what the sarcastic Lee termed "the stumblings of Congress"; such was the case at present. In recent army promotions, Congress had advanced Stirling, Mifflin, St. Clair, Stephen, and Lincoln, to the rank of major-general, while Arnold, their senior in service, and distinguished by so many brilliant exploits, was passed over and left to remain a brigadier.

Washington was surprised at not seeing his name on the list, but supposing it might have been omitted through mistake, he wrote to Arnold, who was at Providence in Rhode Island, advising him not to take any hasty step in consequence, but to allow time for reflection,

* Sparks. *Writings of Washington*, iv., 207.

promising his own endeavors to remedy any error that might have been made. He wrote also to Henry Lee in Congress, inquiring whether the omission was owing to accident or design. "Surely," said he, "a more active, a more spirited, and sensible officer, fills no department of your army. Not seeing him, then, in the list of major-generals, and no mention made of him, has given me uneasiness; as it is not presumed, being the oldest brigadier, that he will continue in service under such a slight."

Arnold was, in truth, deeply wounded by the omission. "I am greatly obliged to your Excellency," writes he to Washington, "for interesting yourself so much in respect to my appointment, which I have had no advice of, and know not by what means it was announced in the papers. Congress undoubtedly have a right of promoting those whom, from their abilities, and their long and arduous services, they esteem most deserving. Their promoting junior officers to the rank of major-generals, I view as a very civil way of requesting my resignation, as unqualified for the office I hold. My commission was conferred unsolicited, and received with pleasure only as a means of serving my country. With equal pleasure I resign it, when I can no longer serve my country

with honor. The person who, void of the nice feelings of honor, will tamely condescend to give up his right, and retain a commission at the expense of his reputation, I hold as a disgrace to the army, and unworthy of the glorious cause in which we are engaged. . . . In justice, therefore, to my own character, and for the satisfaction of my friends, I must request a court of inquiry into my conduct; and though I sensibly feel the ingratitude of my countrymen, yet every personal injury shall be buried in my zeal for the safety and happiness of my country, in whose cause I have repeatedly fought and bled, and am ready at all times to risk my life."

He subsequently intimated that he should avoid any hasty step, and should remain at his post until he could leave it without any damage to the public interest.

The principle upon which Congress had proceeded in their recent promotions was explained to Washington. The number of general officers promoted from each State was proportioned to the number of men furnished by it. Connecticut (Arnold's State) had already two major-generals, which was its full share. "I confess," writes Washington to Arnold, "this is a strange mode of reasoning; but it may serve to show you that the promotion, which

was due to your seniority, was not overlooked for want of merit in you."

"The point," observes he, "is of so delicate a nature, that I will not even undertake to advise. Your own feelings must be your guide. As no particular charge is alleged against you, I do not see upon what grounds you can demand a court of inquiry. Your determination not to quit your present command, while any danger to the public might ensue from your leaving it, deserves my thanks, and justly entitles you to the thanks of the country."

An opportunity occurred before long, for Arnold again to signalize himself.

The amount of stores destroyed at Peekskill had fallen far short of General Howe's expectations. Something more must be done to cripple the Americans before the opening of the campaign. Accordingly, another expedition was set on foot against a still larger deposit at Danbury, within the borders of Connecticut, and between twenty and thirty miles from Peekskill.

Ex-Governor Tryon, recently commissioned major-general of provincials, conducted it, accompanied by Brigadier-General Agnew and Sir William Erskine. He had a mongrel force two thousand strong; American, Irish, and British refugees from various parts of the con-

tinent; and made his appearance on the Sound in the latter part of April, with a fleet of twenty-six sail, greatly to the disquiet of every assailable place along the coast. On the 25th, towards evening, he landed his troops on the beach at the foot of Canepo Hill, near the mouth of the Saugatuck River. The yeomanry of the neighborhood had assembled to resist them, but a few cannon-shot made them give way, and the troops set off for Danbury, about twenty-three miles distant; galled at first by a scattering fire from behind a stone fence. They were in a patriotic neighborhood. General Silliman, of the Connecticut militia, who resided at Fairfield, a few miles distant, sent out expresses to rouse the country. It so happened that General Arnold was at New Haven, between twenty and thirty miles off, on his way to Philadelphia for the purpose of settling his accounts. At the alarm of a British inroad, he forgot his injuries and irritation, mounted his horse, and, accompanied by General Wooster, hastened to join General Silliman. As they spurred forward, every farm-house sent out its warrior, until upwards of a hundred were pressing on with them, full of the fighting spirit. Lieutenant Oswald, Arnold's secretary in the Canada campaign, who had led the forlorn hope in the

attempt upon Quebec, was at this time at New Haven, enlisting men for Lamb's regiment of artillery. He, too, heard the note of alarm, and mustering his recruits, marched off with three field-pieces for the scene of action." *

In the meanwhile the British, marching all night with short haltings, reached Danbury about two o'clock in the afternoon of the 26th. There were but fifty Continental soldiers and one hundred militia in the place. These retreated, as did most of the inhabitants, excepting such as remained to take care of the sick and aged. Four men, intoxicated, as it was said, fired upon the troops from the windows of a large house. The soldiers rushed in, drove them into the cellar, set fire to the house, and left them to perish in the flames.

There was a great quantity of stores of all kinds in the village, and no vehicles to convey them to the ships. The work of destruction commenced. The soldiers made free with the liquors found in abundance; and throughout the greater part of the night there was revel, drunkenness, blasphemy, and devastation. Tryon, full of anxiety, and aware that the country was rising, ordered a retreat before daylight, setting fire to the magazines to complete the destruction of the stores. The flames

* *Life of Lamb*, p. 157.

spread to the other edifices, and almost the whole village was soon in a blaze. The extreme darkness of a rainy night made the conflagration more banefully apparent throughout the country.

While these scenes had been transacted at Danbury, the Connecticut yeomanry had been gathering. Fairfield and the adjacent counties had poured out their minute men. General Silliman had advanced at the head of five hundred. General Wooster and Arnold joined him with their chance followers, as did a few more militia. A heavy rain retarded their march; it was near midnight when they reached Bethel, within four miles of Danbury. Here they halted, to take a little repose and put their arms in order, rendered almost unserviceable by the rain. They were now about six hundred strong. Wooster took the command, as first major-general of the militia of the State. Though in the sixty-eighth year of his age, he was full of ardor, with almost youthful fire and daring. A plan was concerted to punish the enemy on their retreat; and the lurid light of Danbury in flames redoubled the provocation. At dawn of day, Wooster detached Arnold with four hundred men, to push across the country and take post at Ridgefield, by which the British must pass; while he with two hundred re-

mained, to hang on and harass them in flank and rear.

The British began their retreat early in the morning, conducting it in regular style, with flanking parties, and a rear-guard well furnished with artillery. As soon as they had passed his position, Wooster attacked the rear-guard with great spirit and effect; there was sharp skirmishing until within two miles of Ridgefield, when, as the veteran was cheering on his men, who began to waver, a musket-ball brought him down from his horse, and finished his gallant career. On his fall his men retreated in disorder.

The delay which his attack had occasioned to the enemy, had given Arnold time to throw up a kind of breastwork or barricade across the road at the north end of Ridgefield, protected by a house on the right, and a high rocky bank on the left, where he took his stand with his little force now increased to about five hundred men. About eleven o'clock the enemy advanced in column, with artillery and flanking parties. They were kept at bay for a time, and received several volleys from the barricade, until it was outflanked and carried. Arnold ordered a retreat, and was bringing off the rear-guard, when his horse was shot under him, and came down upon his knees. Arnold re-

mained seated in the saddle, with one foot entangled in the stirrups. A tory soldier seeing his plight, rushed towards him with fixed bayonet. He had just time to draw a pistol from the holster. "You 're my prisoner," cried the tory. "Not yet," exclaimed Arnold, and shot him dead. Then extricating his foot from the stirrup, he threw himself into the thickets of a neighboring swamp, and escaped, unharmed by the bullets that whistled after him, and joined his retreating troops.

General Tryon intrenched for the night in Ridgefield, his troops having suffered greatly in their harassed retreat. The next morning, after having set fire to four houses, he continued his march for the ships.

Colonel Huntingdon, of the Continental army, with the troops which had been stationed at Danbury, the scattered forces of Wooster which had joined him, and a number of militia, hung on the rear of the enemy as soon as they were in motion. Arnold was again in the field, with his rallied forces strengthened by Lieutenant-Colonel Oswald with two companies of Lamb's artillery regiment and three field-pieces. With these he again posted himself on the enemy's route.

Difficulties and annoyances had multiplied upon the latter at every step. When they came

in sight of the position where Arnold was waiting for them, they changed their route, wheeled to the left, and made for a ford of Saugatuck River. Arnold hastened to cross the bridge and take them in flank, but they were too quick for him. Colonel Lamb had now reached the scene of action, as had about two hundred volunteers. Leaving to Oswald the charge of the artillery, he put himself at the head of the volunteers, and led them up to Arnold's assistance.

The enemy, finding themselves hard pressed, pushed for Canepo Hill. They reached it in the evening, without a round of ammunition in their cartridge-boxes. As they were now within cannon-shot of their ships, the Americans ceased their pursuit. The British formed upon high ground, brought their artillery to the front, and sent off to the ships for reinforcements. Sir William Erskine landed a large body of marines and sailors, who drove the Americans back for some distance, and covered the embarkation of the troops. Colonel Lamb, while leading on his men gallantly to capture the British field-pieces, was wounded by a grape-shot, and Arnold, while cheering on the militia, had another horse shot under him. In the meantime, the harassed marauders effected their embarkation, and the fleet got under way.

In this inroad the enemy destroyed a considerable amount of military stores, and seventeen hundred tents prepared for the use of Washington's army in the ensuing campaign. The loss of General Wooster was deeply deplored. He survived the action long enough to be consoled in his dying moments at Danbury, by the presence of his wife and son, who hastened thither from New Haven. As to Arnold, his gallantry in this affair gained him fresh laurels, and Congress, to remedy their late error, promoted him to the rank of major-general. Still this promotion did not restore him to his proper position. He was at the bottom of the list of major-generals, with four officers above him, his juniors in service. Washington felt this injustice on the part of Congress, and wrote about it to the president. "He has certainly discovered," said he, "in every instance where he has had an opportunity, much bravery, activity, and enterprise. But what will be done about his rank? He will not act, most probably, under those he commanded but a few weeks ago."

As an additional balm to Arnold's wounded pride, Congress a few days afterwards voted that a horse, properly caparisoned, should be presented to him in their name, as a token of their approbation of his gallant conduct in the

late action, "in which he had one horse shot under him and another wounded." But after all he remained at the bottom of the list, and the wound still rankled in his bosom.

The destructive expeditions against the American depots of military stores, were retaliated in kind by Colonel Meigs, a spirited officer, who had accompanied Arnold in his expedition through the wilderness against Quebec, and had caught something of his love for hardy exploit. Having received intelligence that the British commissaries had collected a great amount of grain, forage, and other supplies at Sag Harbor, a small port in the deep bay which forks the east end of Long Island, he crossed the Sound on the 23d of May from Guilford in Connecticut, with about one hundred and seventy men in whaleboats convoyed by two armed sloops: landed on the island near Southold; carried the boats a distance of fifteen miles across the north fork of the bay, launched them into the latter, crossed it, landed within four miles of Sag Harbor, and before daybreak carried the place, which was guarded by a company of foot. A furious fire of round and grape shot was opened upon the Americans from an armed schooner, anchored about one hundred and fifty yards from shore; and stout defense was made by the crews of a dozen

brigs and sloops lying at the wharf to take in freight; but Meigs succeeded in burning these vessels, destroying everything on shore, and carrying off ninety prisoners; among whom were the officer of the company of foot, the commissaries, and the captains of most of the small vessels. With these he and his party recrossed the bay, transported their boats again across the fork of land, launched them on the Sound, and got safe back to Guilford, having achieved all this, and traversed about ninety miles of land and water, in twenty-five hours. Washington was so highly pleased with the spirit and success of this enterprise, that he publicly returned thanks to Colonel Meigs and the officers and men engaged in it. It could not fail, he said, greatly to distress the enemy in the important and essential article of forage. But it was the moral effect of the enterprise which gave it the most value. It is difficult, at the present day, sufficiently to appreciate the importance of partisan exploits of the kind, in the critical stage of the war of which we are treating. They cheered the spirit of the people, depressed by overshadowing dangers and severe privations, and kept alive the military spark that was to kindle into the future flame.

Chapter IX.

Schuyler on the Point of Resigning—Committee of Inquiry Report in his Favor—His Memorial to Congress Proves Satisfactory—Discussions Regarding the Northern Department—Gates Mistaken as to his Position—He Prompts his Friends in Congress—His Petulant Letter to Washington—Dignified Reply of the Latter—Position of Gates Defined—Schuyler Reinstated in Command of the Department—Gates Appears on the Floor of Congress—His Proceedings there.

THE time was at hand for the committee of inquiry on General Schuyler's conduct to make their report to Congress, and he awaited it with impatience. "I propose in a day or two to resign my commission," writes he to Washington on the 3d of May. "As soon as I have done it, I shall transmit to your Excellency my reasons for such a step."

Washington was grieved at receiving this intimation. He had ever found Schuyler a

faithful coadjutor. He knew his peculiar fitness for the Northern department from his knowledge of the country and its people, his influence among its most important citizens, his experience in treating with the Indians, his fiery energy, his fertility in expedients, and his "sound military sense." But he knew also his sensitive nature, and the peculiar annoyances with which he had had to contend. On a former occasion he had prevented him from resigning, by an appeal to his patriotism; he no longer felt justified in interfering. "I am sorry," writes he, "that circumstances are such as to dispose you to a resignation; but you are the best judge of the line of conduct most reconcilable to your duty, both in a public and personal view; and your own feelings must determine you in a matter of so delicate and interesting a nature." *

Affairs, however, were taking a more favorable turn. The committee of inquiry made a report which placed the character of Schuyler higher than ever as an able and active commander, and a zealous and disinterested patriot.

He made a memorial to Congress explaining away or apologizing for the expressions in his letter of the 4th of February, which had given

* Schuyler's Letter Book.

offense to the House. His memorial was satisfactory; and he was officially informed that Congress now "entertained the same favorable sentiments concerning him, that they had entertained before the letter was received."

There were warm discussions in the House on the subject of the Northern department. Several of the most important of the New York delegates observed that General Gates misapprehended his position. He considered himself as holding the same command as that formerly held by General Schuyler. Such was not the intention of Congress in sending him to take command of the army at Ticonderoga. There had been a question between sending him to *that post*, or giving him the adjutancy general, and it had been decided for the former.

It would be nonsense, they observed, to give him command of the Northern department, and confine him to Ticonderoga and Mount Independence, where he could not have an extensive idea of the defense of the frontier of the Eastern States; but only of one spot, to which the enemy were not obliged to confine their operations, and, as it were, to knock their heads against a single rock. The affairs of the northeast, it was added, and of the State of New York in particular, were in a critical con-

dition. Much disaffection prevailed, and great clashing of interests. There was but one man capable of keeping all united against the common enemy, and he stood on the books as commander-in-chief of the Middle, or, as it was sometimes called, the Northern department. His presence was absolutely necessary in his home quarters for their immediate succor, but if he returned, he would be a general, without an army or a military chest; and why was he thus disgraced?

The friends of Gates, on the other hand, who were chiefly delegates from New England, pronounced it an absurdity, that an officer holding such an important post as Ticonderoga, should be under the absolute orders of another one hundred miles distant, engaged in treaties with Indians, and busied in the duties of a provedore. The establishment of commands in departments was entirely wrong; there should be a commander-in-chief, and commanders of the different armies.

We gather these scanty particulars from a letter addressed to Gates by Mr. Lovell. The latter expresses himself with a proper spirit. "I wish," writes he, "some course could be taken which would suit you both. It is plain all the Northern army cannot be intended for the single garrison of Ticonderoga. Who then

has the distribution of the members? This must depend on one opinion, or there can be no decision in the defense of the Northern frontiers. It is an unhappy circumstance that such is the altercation at the opening of the campaign."

This letter produced an anxious reply: "Why," writes Gates, "when the argument in support of General Schuyler's command was imposed upon Congress, did not you or somebody say, 'the second post upon this continent next campaign will be at or near Peekskill. There General Schuyler ought to go and command; that will be the curb in the mouth of the New York tories, and the enemy's army. He will then be near the convention and in the centre of the colony, have a military chest, and all the insignia of office.' This command in honor could not be refused, without owning there is something more alluring than command to General Schuyler, by fixing him at Albany. By urging this matter home you would have proved the man. He would have resigned all command, have accepted the government of New York, and been fixed to a station where he must do good, and which could not interfere with, or prevent any arrangement Congress have made, or may hereafter make. Unhappy State! That has but

one man in it who can fix the wavering minds of its inhabitants to the side of freedom! How could you sit patiently, and, uncontradicted, suffer such impertinence to be crammed down your throats?"

"Why is it nonsense," pursues Gates, "to station the commanding general in the Northern department at Ticonderoga? Was it not the uniform practice of the royal army all last war? Nothing is more certain than that the enemy must first possess that single rock before they can penetrate the country. . . . It is foolish in the extreme, to believe the enemy this year can form any attack from the northward but by Ticonderoga. Where, then, ought the commanding general to be posted? Certainly at Ticonderoga. If General Schuyler is solely to possess all the power, all the intelligence, and that particular favorite, the military chest, and constantly reside at Albany, I cannot, with any peace of mind, serve at Ticonderoga." *

This letter was despatched by private hand to Philadelphia.

While Gates was in this mood, his aide-de-camp, Major Troup, reported an unsuccessful application to the commander-in-chief for tents.

* Letter to Jas. Lovell of Massachusetts. Gates's *Papers*, N. Y. Hist. Lib.

In the petulance of the moment, Gates addressed the following letter to Washington: "Major Troup, upon being disappointed in procuring tents at Fishkill, acquaints me that he went to headquarters to implore your Excellency's aid in that particular for the Northern army. He says your Excellency told him you should want every tent upon the continent for the armies to the southward, and that you did not see any occasion the Northern army could have for tents, for, being a fixed post, they might hut. Refusing this army what you have not in your power to bestow, is one thing," adds Gates, "but saying that this army has not the same necessities as the Southern armies, is another. I can assure your Excellency the service of the northward requires tents as much as any service I ever saw." *

However indignant Washington may have felt at the disrespectful tone of this letter, and the unwarrantable imputation of sectional partiality contained in it, he contented himself with a grave and measured rebuke. "Can you suppose," writes he, "if there had been an ample supply of tents for the whole army, that I should have hesitated one moment in complying with your demand? I told Major Troup that on account of our loss at Danbury there

* Gates's *Papers*.

would be a scarcity of tents; that our army would be a moving one, and that consequently nothing but tents would serve our turn; and that, therefore, as there would be the greatest probability of your being stationary, you should endeavor to cover your troops with barracks and huts. Certainly this was not a refusal of tents, but a request that you should, in our contracted situation, make every shift to do without them, or at least with as few as possible.

"The Northern army is, and ever has been, as much the object of my care and attention as the one immediately under my command. . . . I will make particular inquiry of the quartermaster-general, concerning his prospect and expectation as to the article of tents, and if, as I said before, there appears a sufficiency for the whole army, you shall most willingly have your share. But, if there is not, surely that army whose movement is uncertain, must give up its claims for the present to that which must inevitably take the field the moment the weather will admit, and must continue in it the whole campaign."*

Notwithstanding this reply, Gates persisted in imputing sectional partiality to the commander-in-chief, and sought to impart the same idea to Congress. "Either I am exceed-

* *Washington's Writings*, Sparks, iv., 427.

ingly dull or unreasonably jealous," writes he to his correspondent Mr. Lovell, "if I do not discover by the style and tenor of the letters from Morristown how little I have to expect from thence. Generals are so far like parsons, they are all for christening their own child first; but, let an impartial moderating power decide between us and do not suffer Southern prejudices to weigh heavier in the balance than the Northern." *

A letter from Mr. Lovell, dated the 23d of May, put an end to the suspense of the general with respect to his position. "Misconceptions of past resolves and consequent jealousies," writes he, "have produced a definition of the Northern department, and General Schuyler is ordered to take command of it. The resolve, also, which was thought to *fix* headquarters at Albany, is repealed."

Such a resolve had actually been passed on the 22d, and Albany, Ticonderoga, Fort Stanwix, and their dependencies, were thenceforward to be considered as forming the Northern department. The envoy of Gates, bearing the letter in which he had carved out a command for Schuyler at Peekskill, arrived at Philadelphia too late. The general was already provided for.

Schuyler was received with open arms at

* Gates's *Papers*, N. Y. Hist. Lib.

Albany, on the 3d of June. "I had the satisfaction," writes he, "to experience the finest feelings which my country expressed on my arrival and reappointment. The day after my arrival, the whole county committee did me the honor in form to congratulate me."

Gates was still in Albany, delaying to proceed with General Fermois to Ticonderoga until the garrison should be sufficiently strengthened. Although the resolve of Congress did but define his position, which had been misunderstood, he persisted in considering himself degraded; declined serving under General Schuyler, who would have given him the post at Ticonderoga in his absence; and obtaining permission to leave the department, set out on the 9th for Philadelphia, to demand redress of Congress.

General St. Clair was sent to take command of the troops at Ticonderoga, accompanied by General Fermois. As the whole force in the Northern department would not be sufficient to command the extensive works there on both sides of the lake, St. Clair was instructed to bestow his first attention in fortifying Mount Independence, on the east side, Schuyler considering it much the most defensible, and that it might be made capable of sustaining a long and vigorous siege.

"I am fully convinced," writes he, "that between two and three thousand men can effectually maintain Mount Independence and secure the pass."

It would be imprudent, he thought, to station the greater part of the forces at Fort Ticonderoga; as, should the enemy be able to invest it, and cut off the communication with the country on the east side, it might experience a disaster similar to that at Fort Washington.

The orders of Schuyler to officers commanding posts in the department, are characterized by his Dutch attention to cleanliness as to the quarters of the soldiers, their bedding, clothing, and equipments.

All officers mounting guard, were to have their hair dressed and powdered. The adjutants of the several corps were to be particularly careful that none of the non-commissioned officers and soldiers mount guard without having their hair dressed and powdered, their persons perfectly clean, and their arms and accoutrements in the most complete order.

While Schuyler was thus providing for the security of Ticonderoga, and enforcing cleanliness in his department, Gates was wending his way to Philadelphia, his bosom swelling with imaginary wrongs. He arrived there on the 18th. The next day at noon, Mr. Roger Sher-

man, an Eastern delegate, informed Congress that General Gates was waiting at the door, and wished admittance.

"For what purpose?" it was asked.

"To communicate intelligence of importance," replied Mr. Sherman.

Gates was accordingly ushered in, took his seat in an elbow chair, and proceeded to give some news concerning the Indians; their friendly dispositions, their delight at seeing French officers in the American service, and other matters of the kind; then, drawing forth some papers from his pocket, he opened upon the real object of his visit; stating from his notes, in a flurried and disjointed manner, the easy and happy life he had left to take up arms for the liberties of America; and how strenuously he had exerted himself in its defense; how that some time in March he had been appointed to a command in the Northern department; but that a few days since, without having given any cause of offense, without accusation, without trial, without hearing, without notice, he had received a resolution by which he was, in a most disgraceful manner, superseded in his command. Here his irritated feelings got the better of his judgment, and he indulged in angry reproaches of Congress, and recitals of a conversation which had taken place between

him and Mr. Duane, a member of the House, whom he considered his enemy. Here Mr. Duane rose, and addressing himself to the president, hoped the general would observe order, and cease any personal observations, as he could not, in Congress, enter into any controversy with him upon the subject of former conversations.

Other of the members took fire; the conduct of the general was pronounced disrespectful to the House, and unworthy of himself, and it was moved and seconded that he be requested to withdraw. Some of the Eastern delegates opposed the motion, and endeavored to palliate his conduct. A wordy clamor ensued, during which the general stood, his papers in his hand, endeavoring several times to be heard, but the clamor increasing, he withdrew with the utmost indignation. It was then determined that he should not again be admitted on the floor; but should be informed that Congress were ready and willing to hear, by way of memorial, any grievances of which he might have to complain.*

* Letter of the Hon. Wm. Duer. Schuyler's *Papers*.

Chapter X.

The Highland Passes of the Hudson—George Clinton in Command of the Forts—His Measures for Defense—Generals Greene and Knox Examine the State of the Forts—Their Report—The General Command of the Hudson Offered to Arnold—Declined by him—Given to Putnam—Appointment of Dr. Craik in the Medical Department—Expedition Planned against Fort Independence—But Relinquished—Washington Shifts his Camp to Middlebrook—State of his Army—General Howe Crosses into the Jerseys—Position of the Two Armies at Middlebrook and behind the Raritan—Correspondence between Washington and Colonel Reed.

THE Highland passes of the Hudson, always objects of anxious thought to Washington, were especially so at this juncture. General McDougall still commanded at Peekskill, and General George Clinton, who resided at New Windsor, had command of the Highland forts. The latter, at the earnest request of the New York Con-

vention, had received from Congress the command of brigadier-general in the Continental army. "My precarious state of health and want of military knowledge," writes he, "would have rather induced me to have led a more retired life than that of the army, had I been consulted on the occasion; but as, early in the present contest, I laid it down as a maxim not to refuse my best, though poor services, to my country in any way they should think proper to employ me, I cannot refuse the honor done me in the present appointment." *

He was perfectly sincere in what he said. George Clinton was one of the soldiers of the Revolution who served from a sense of duty, not from military inclination or a thirst for glory. A long career of public service in various capacities illustrated his modest worth and devoted patriotism.

When the "unhappy affair of Peekskill" had alarmed the Convention of New York for the safety of the forts on the Highlands, Clinton, authorized by that body, had ordered out part of the militia of Orange, Dutchess, and Westchester counties, without waiting for Washington's approbation of the measure. He had strengthened, also, with anchors and cables, the chain drawn across the river at Fort Mont-

* Clinton to Washington.

gomery. "Had the Convention suffered me to have paid my whole attention to this business," writes he to Washington (18th April), "it would have been nearly completed by this time."

A few days later came word that several transports were anchored at Dobbs Ferry in the Tappan Sea. It might be intended to divert attention from a movement towards the Delaware; or to make incursions into the country back of Morristown, seize on the passes through the mountains, and cut off the communication between the army and the Hudson. To frustrate such a design, Washington ordered Clinton to post as good a number of troops from his garrison as he could spare, on the mountains west of the river.

In the month of May, he writes to General McDougall: "The imperfect state of the fortifications of Fort Montgomery gives me great uneasiness, because I think, from a concurrence of circumstances, that it begins to look as if the enemy intended to turn their view towards the North River instead of the Delaware. I therefore desire that General George Clinton and yourself will fall upon every measure to put the fortifications in such a state that they may at least resist a sudden attack, and keep the enemy employed till rein-

forcements may arrive. If the North River is their object, they cannot accomplish it unless they withdraw their forces from the Jerseys, and that they cannot do unknown to us."

On the 12th of May, General Greene received instructions from Washington to proceed to the Highlands, and examine the state and condition of the forts, especially Fort Montgomery: the probability of an attack by water, the practicability of an approach by land; where and how this could be effected, and the eminences whence the forts could be annoyed. This done, and the opinions of the general officers present having been consulted, he was to give such orders and make such disposition of the troops as might appear necessary for the greater security of the passes by land and water. When reconnoitering the Highlands in the preceding year, Washington had remarked a wild and rugged pass on the western side of the Hudson round Bull Hill, a rocky, forest-clad mountain, forming an advance rampart at the entrance to Peekskill Bay. "This pass," he observed, "should also be attended to, *lest the enemy by a coup de main should possess themselves of it, before a sufficient force could be assembled to oppose them.*" Subsequent events will illustrate, though unfortunately, the sagacity and foresight of this particular instruction.

General Knox was associated with General Greene in this visit of inspection. They examined the river and the passes of the Highlands in company with Generals McDougall, George Clinton, and Anthony Wayne. The latter, recently promoted to the rank of brigadier, had just returned from Ticonderoga. The five generals made a joint report to Washington, in which they recommended the completion of the obstructions in the river already commenced. These consisted of a boom, or heavy iron chain, across the river from Fort Montgomery to Anthony's Nose, with cables stretched in front to break the force of any ship under way, before she could strike it. The boom was to be protected by the guns of two ships and two row galleys stationed just above it, and by batteries on shore. This, it was deemed, would be sufficient to prevent the enemy's ships from ascending the river. If these obstructions could be rendered effective, they did not think the enemy would attempt to operate by land, "the passes through the Highlands being so exceedingly difficult."

The general command of the Hudson, from the number of troops to be assembled there, and the variety of points to be guarded, was one of the most important in the service, and required an officer of consummate energy, ac-

tivity, and judgment. It was a major-general's command, and as such was offered by Washington to Arnold; intending thus publicly to manifest his opinion of his deserts, and hoping, by giving him so important a post, to appease his irritated feelings.

Arnold, however, declined to accept it. In an interview with Washington at Morristown, he alleged his anxiety to proceed to Philadelphia and settle his public accounts, which were of considerable amount; especially as reports had been circulated injurious to his character as a man of integrity. He intended, therefore, to wait on Congress, and request a committee of inquiry into his conduct. Besides, he did not consider the promotion conferred on him by Congress sufficient to obviate their previous neglect, as it did not give him the rank he had a claim to, from seniority in the line of brigadiers. In their last resolve respecting him, they had acknowledged him competent to the station of major-general, and, therefore, had done away every objection implied by their former omission. With these considerations he proceeded to Philadelphia, bearing a letter from Washington to the President of Congress, countenancing his complaints, and testifying to the excellence of his military character. We may here add, that the accusations against

him were pronounced false and slanderous by the Board of War; that the report of the board was confirmed by Congress, but that Arnold was still left aggrieved and unredressed in point of rank.

The important command of the Hudson being declined by Arnold, was now given to Putnam, who repaired forthwith to Peekskill. General McDougall was requested by Washington to aid the veteran in gaining a knowledge of the post. "You are well acquainted," writes he, "with the old gentleman's temper; he is active, disinterested, and open to conviction."

Putnam set about promptly to carry into effect the measures of security which Greene and Knox had recommended; especially the boom and chain at Fort Montgomery, about which General George Clinton had busied himself. Putnam had a peculiar fancy for river obstructions of the kind. A large part of the New York and New England troops were stationed at this post, not merely to guard the Hudson, but to render aid either to the Eastern or Middle States in case of exigency.

About this time, Washington had the satisfaction of drawing near to him his old friend and travelling companion, Dr. James Craik, the same who had served with him in Braddock's campaign, and had voyaged with him

down the Ohio; for whom he now procured the appointment of assistant director-general of the hospital department of the Middle district, which included the States between the Hudson and the Potomac. In offering the situation to the doctor, he writes: "You know how far you may be benefited or injured by such an appointment, and whether it is advisable or practicable for you to quit your family and practice at this time. I request, as a friend, that my proposing this matter to you may have no influence upon your acceptance of it. I have no other end in view than to serve you." Dr. Craik, it will be found, remained his attached and devoted friend through life.

It had been Washington's earnest wish in the early part of the spring, to take advantage of the inactivity of the enemy, and attempt some "capital stroke" for the benefit of the next campaign; but the want of troops prevented him. He now planned a night expedition for Putnam, exactly suited to the humor of the old general. He was to descend the Hudson in boats, surprise Fort Independence at Spyt den Duivel Creek, capture the garrison, and sweep the road between that post and the Highlands. Putnam was all on fire for the enterprise, when movements on the part of the

enemy, seemingly indicative of a design upon Philadelphia, obliged Washington to abandon the project, and exert all his vigilance in watching the hostile operations in the Jerseys.

Accordingly, towards the end of May, he broke up his cantonments at Morristown, and shifted his camp to Middlebrook, within ten miles of Brunswick. His whole force fit for duty was now about seven thousand three hundred men, all from the States south of the Hudson. There were forty-three regiments, forming ten brigades, commanded by Brigadiers Muhlenberg, Weedon, Woodford, Scott, Smallwood, Deborre, Wayne, Dehaas, Conway, and Maxwell. These were apportioned into five divisions of two brigades each, under Major-Generals Greene, Stephen, Sullivan, Lincoln, and Stirling. The artillery was commanded by Knox. Sullivan, with his division, was stationed on the right at Princeton. With the rest of his force Washington fortified himself in a position naturally strong, among hills, in the rear of the village of Middlebrook. His camp was, on all sides, difficult of approach, and he rendered it still more so by intrenchments. The high grounds about it commanded a wide view of the country around Brunswick, the road to Philadelphia, and the course of the Raritan, so that the enemy could make no

important movement on land, without his perceiving it.

It was now the beautiful season of the year, and the troops from their height beheld a fertile and well cultivated country spread before them, "painted with meadows, green fields, and orchards, studded with villages, and affording abundant supplies and forage." A part of their duty was to guard it from the ravage of the enemy, while they held themselves ready to counteract his movements in every direction.

On the 31st of May, reports were brought to camp that a fleet of a hundred sail had left New York, and stood out to sea. Whither bound, and how freighted, was unknown. If they carried troops, their destination might be Delaware Bay. Eighteen transports, also, had arrived at New York, with troops in foreign uniforms. Were they those which had been in Canada, or others immediately from Germany? Those who had reconnoitered them with glasses could not tell. All was matter of anxious conjecture.

Lest the fleet which had put to sea should be bound farther south than Delaware Bay, Washington instantly wrote to Patrick Henry, at that time governor of Virginia, putting him on his guard. "Should this fleet arrive on your coast, and the enemy attempt to penetrate

the country, or make incursions, I would recommend that the earliest opposition be made by parties and detachments of militia, without waiting to collect a large body. I am convinced that this would be attended with the most salutary consequences, and that greater advantages would be derived from it, than by deferring the opposition till you assembled a number equal to that of the enemy."

The troops in foreign uniforms which had landed from the transports, proved to be Anspachers, and other German mercenaries ; there were British reinforcements also ; and, what was particularly needed, a supply of tents and camp equipage. Sir William Howe had been waiting for the latter, and likewise until the ground should be covered with grass.*

The country was now in full verdure, affording "green forage" in abundance, and all things seemed to Sir William propitious for the opening of the campaign. Early in June, therefore, he gave up ease and gayety, and luxurious life at New York, and crossing into the Jerseys, set up his headquarters at Brunswick.

As soon as Washington ascertained that Sir William's attention was completely turned to this quarter, he determined to strengthen his

* Evidence of Major-General Gray before the House of Commons.

position with all the force that could be spared from other parts, so as to be able, in case a favorable opportunity presented, to make an attack upon the enemy; in the meantime, he would harass them with his light militia troops, aided by a few Continentals, so as to weaken their numbers by continual skirmishes. With this view, he ordered General Putnam to send down most of the continental troops from Peekskill, leaving only a number sufficient, in conjunction with the militia, to guard that post against surprise. They were to proceed in three divisions, under Generals Parsons, McDougall, and Glover, at one day's march distant from each other.

Arnold, in this critical juncture, had been put in command of Philadelphia, a post which he had been induced to accept, although the question of rank had not been adjusted to his satisfaction. His command embraced the western bank of the Delaware with all its fords and passes, and he took up his station there with a strong body of militia, supported by a few Continentals, to oppose any attempt of the enemy to cross the river. He was instructed by Washington to give him notice by expresses, posted on the road, if any fleet should appear in Delaware Bay; and to endeavor to concert signals with the camp of Sul-

livan at Princeton, by alarm fires upon the hills.

On the night of the 13th of June, General Howe sallied forth in great force from Brunswick, as if pushing directly for the Delaware, but his advanced guard halted at Somerset court-house, about eight or nine miles distant. Apprised of this movement, Washington at daybreak reconnoitered the enemy from the heights before the camp. He observed their front halting at the court-house, but a few miles distant, while troops and artillery were grouped here and there along the road, and the rear-guard was still at Brunswick. It was a question with Washington and his generals, as they reconnoitered the enemy with their glasses, whether this was a real move toward Philadelphia, or merely a lure to tempt them down from their strong position. In this uncertainty, Washington drew out his army in battle array along the heights, but kept quiet. In the present state of his forces it was his plan not to risk a general action; but, should the enemy really march toward the Delaware, to hang heavily upon their rear. Their principal difficulty would be in crossing that river, and there, he trusted, they would meet with spirited opposition from the continental troops and militia, stationed on the western side under Arnold and Mifflin.

The British took up a strong position, having Millstone Creek on their left, the Raritan all along their front, and their right resting on Brunswick, and proceeded to fortify themselves with bastions.

While thus anxiously situated, Washington, on the 14th, received a letter from Colonel Reed, his former secretary and confidential friend. A coolness had existed on the general's part, ever since he had unwarily opened the satirical letter of General Lee; yet he had acted towards Reed with his habitual highmindedness, and had recently nominated him as general of cavalry. The latter had deeply deplored the interruption of their once unreserved intercourse: he had long, he said, desired to have one hour of private conversation with Washington on the subject of Lee's letter, but had deferred it in the hope of obtaining his own letter to which that was an answer. In that he had been disappointed by Lee's captivity. On the present occasion, Reed's heart was full, and he refers to former times in language that is really touching:

"I am sensible, my dear sir," writes he, "how difficult it is to regain lost friendship; but the consciousness of never having justly forfeited yours, and the hope that it may be in my power fully to convince you of it, are some con-

solation for an event which I never think of but with the greatest concern. In the meantime, my dear general, let me entreat you to judge of me by realities, not by appearances; and believe that I never entertained or expressed a sentiment incompatible with that regard I professed for your person and character, and which, whether I shall be so happy as to possess your future good opinion or not, I shall carry to my grave with me.

"A late persual of the letters you honored me with at Cambridge and New York, last year, afforded me a melancholy pleasure. I cannot help acknowledging myself deeply affected, in a comparison with those which I have since received. I should not, my dear sir, have trespassed on your time and patience at this juncture so long, but that a former letter upon this subject I fear has miscarried; and whatever may be my future destination and course of life, I could not support the reflection of being thought ungrateful and insincere to a friendship which was equally my pride and my pleasure. May God Almighty crown your virtue, my dear and much respected general, with deserved success, and make your life as happy and honorable to yourself as it has been useful to your country."

The heart of Washington was moved by this

appeal, and though in the midst of military preparations, with a hostile army at hand, he detained Colonel Reed's messenger long enough to write a short letter in reply: "to thank you," said he, "as I do most sincerely, for the friendly and affectionate sentiments contained in yours towards me, and to assure you that I am perfectly convinced of the sincerity of them.

"True it is, I felt myself hurt by a certain letter which appeared at that time to be the echo of one from you; I was hurt—not because I thought my judgment wronged by the expressions contained in it, but because the same sentiments were not communicated immediately to myself. The favorable manner in which your opinions, upon all occasions, had been received, the impressions they made, and the unreserved manner in which I wished and required them to be given, entitled me, I thought, to your advice upon any point in which I appeared to be wanting. To meet with anything, then, that carried with it a complexion of withholding that advice from me, and censuring my conduct to another, was such an argument of disingenuity, that I was not a little mortified at it. However, I am perfectly satisfied that matters were not as they appeared from the letter alluded to."

Washington was not of a distrustful spirit.

From this moment, we are told that all estrangement disappeared, and the ancient relations of friendly confidence between him and Colonel Reed were restored.* His whole conduct throughout the affair bears evidence of his candor and magnanimity.

* *Life of Reed*, by his grandson.

Chapter XI.

Feigned Movements of Sir William Howe—Baffling Caution of Washington—Rumored Inroads from the North—Schuyler Applies for Reinforcements—Renewed Schemes of Howe to Draw Washington from his Stronghold — Skirmish between Cornwallis and Lord Stirling—The Enemy Evacuate the Jerseys—Perplexity as to their Next Movement—A Hostile Fleet on Lake Champlain—Burgoyne Approaching Ticonderoga—Speculations of Washington—His Purpose of Keeping Sir William Howe from Ascending the Hudson—Orders George Clinton to Call out Militia from Ulster and Orange Counties—Sends Sullivan towards the Highlands—Moves his Own Camp back to Morristown — Stir among the Shipping—Their Destination Surmised to be Philadelphia — A Dinner at Headquarters—Alexander Hamilton — Graydon's Rueful Description of the Army—His Character of Wayne.

THE American and British armies, strongly posted, as we have shown, the former along the heights of Middlebrook, the other beyond the Raritan, remained four days grimly regarding each other: both waiting to be attacked. The Jer-

sey militia, which now turned out with alacrity, repaired, some to Washington's camp, others to that of Sullivan. The latter had fallen back from Princeton, and taken a position behind the Sourland Hills.

Howe pushed out detachments, and made several feints, as if to pass by the American camp and march to the Delaware; but Washington was not to be deceived. "The enemy will not move that way," said he, "until they have given this army a severe blow. The risk would be too great to attempt to cross a river where they must expect to meet a formidable opposition in front, and would have such a force as ours in their rear." He kept on the heights, therefore, and strengthened his intrenchments.

Baffled in these attempts to draw his cautious adversary into a general action, Howe, on the 19th, suddenly broke up his camp, and pretended to return with some precipitation to Brunswick, burning as he went several valuable dwelling-houses. Washington's light troops hovered round the enemy as far as the Raritan and Millstone, which secured their flanks, would permit; but the main army kept to its stronghold on the heights.

On the next day came warlike news from the North. Amesbury, a British spy, had been

seized and examined by Schuyler. Burgoyne was stated as being arrived at Quebec to command the forces in an invasion from Canada. While he advanced with his main force by Lake Champlain, a detachment of British troops, Canadians and Indians, led by Sir John Johnson, was to penetrate by Oswego to the Mohawk River, and place itself between Fort Stanwix and Fort Edward.

If this information was correct, Ticonderoga would soon be attacked. The force there might be sufficient for its defense, but Schuyler would have no troops to oppose the inroad of Sir John Johnson, and he urged a reinforcement. Washington forthwith sent orders to Putnam to procure sloops, and hold four Massachusetts regiments in readiness to go up the river at a moment's warning. Still, if the information of the spy was correct, he doubted the ability of the enemy to carry the reported plan into effect. It did not appear that Burgoyne had brought any reinforcements from Europe. If so, he could not move with a greater force than five thousand men. The garrison at Ticonderoga was sufficiently strong, according to former accounts, to hold it against an attack. Burgoyne certainly would never leave it in his rear, and if he invested it, he would not have a sufficient number left to send one body to

Oswego, and another to cut off the communications, between Fort Edward and Fort George. Such was Washington's reasoning in a reply to Schuyler. In the meantime he retained his mind unflurried by these new rumors; keeping from his heights a vigilant eye upon General Howe.

On the 22d, Sir William again marched out of Brunswick, but this time proceeded towards Amboy, again burning several houses on the way; hoping, perhaps, that the sight of columns of smoke rising from a ravaged country would irritate the Americans and provoke an attack. Washington sent out three brigades under General Greene to fall upon the rear of the enemy, while Morgan hung upon their skirts with his riflemen. At the same time the army remained paraded on the heights, ready to yield support, if necessary.

Finding that Howe had actually sent his heavy baggage and part of his troops over to Staten Island by a bridge of boats which he had thrown across, Washington, on the 24th, left the heights and descended to Quibbletown (now New Market), six or seven miles on the road to Amboy, to be nearer at hand for the protection of his advanced parties; while Lord Stirling with his division and some light troops was at Matouchin church, closer to the enemy's

lines, to watch their motions, and be ready to harass them while crossing to the island.

General Howe now thought he had gained his point. Recalling those who had crossed, he formed his troops into two columns, the right led by Cornwallis, the left by himself, and marched back rapidly by different routes from Amboy. He had three objects in view: to cut off the principal advanced parties of the Americans; to come up with and bring the main body into an engagement near Quibbletown; or that Lord Cornwallis, making a considerable circuit to the right, should turn the left of Washington's position, get to the heights, take possession of the passes, and oblige him to abandon that stronghold where he had hitherto been so secure.*

Washington, however, had timely notice of his movements, and penetrating his design, regained his fortified camp at Middlebrook, and secured the passes of the mountains. He then detached a body of light troops under Brigadier-General Scott, together with Morgan's riflemen, to hang on the flank of the enemy and watch their motions.

Cornwallis, in his circuitous march, dispersed the light parties of the advance, but fell in with Lord Stirling's division, strongly

* *Civil War in America*, vol. i., p. 247.

posted in a woody country, and well covered by artillery judiciously disposed. A sharp skirmish ensued, when the Americans gave way and retreated to the hills, with the loss of a few men and three field-pieces; while the British halted at Westfield, disappointed in the main objects of their enterprise. They remained at Westfield until the afternoon of the 27th, when they moved toward Spanktown (now Rahway), plundering all before them, and, it is said, burning several houses; but pursued and harassed the whole way by the American light troops.*

Perceiving that every scheme of bringing the Americans to the general action, or at least of withdrawing them from their strongholds, was rendered abortive by the caution and prudence of Washington, and aware of the madness of attempting to march to the Delaware, through a hostile country, with such a force in his rear, Sir William Howe broke up his headquarters at Amboy on the last of June, and crossed over to Staten Island on the floating bridge; his troops that were encamped opposite to Amboy struck their tents on the following day, and marched off to the old camping ground on the bay of New York; the ships

* Letter to the President of Congress, 28th June, 1777.

got under way, and moved down round the island; and it was soon apparent, that at length the enemy had really evacuated the Jerseys.

The question now was, what would be their next move? A great stir among the shipping seemed to indicate an expedition by water. But whither? Circumstances occurred to perplex the question.

Scarce had the last tent been struck, and the last transport disappeared from before Amboy, when intelligence arrived from General St. Clair, announcing the appearance of a hostile fleet on Lake Champlain, and that General Burgoyne with the whole Canada army was approaching Ticonderoga. The judgment and circumspection of Washington were never more severely put to the proof. Was this merely a diversion with a small force of light troops and Indians, intended to occupy the attention of the American forces in that quarter, while the main body of the army in Canada should come round by sea, and form a junction with the army under Howe? But General Burgoyne, in Washington's opinion, was a man of too much spirit and enterprise to return from England merely to execute a plan from which no honor was to be derived. Did he really intend to break through by the way of Ticonderoga?

In that case it must be Howe's plan to co-operate with him. Had all the recent manœuvres of the enemy in the Jerseys, which had appeared so enigmatical to Washington, been merely a stratagem to amuse him until they should receive intelligence of the movements of Burgoyne? If so, Sir William must soon throw off the mask. His next move, in such case, would be to ascend the Hudson, seize on the Highland passes before Washington could form a union with the troops stationed there, and thus open the way for the junction with Burgoyne. Should Washington, however, on such a presumption, hasten with his troops to Peekskill, leaving General Howe on Staten Island, what would prevent the latter from pushing to Philadelphia by South Amboy or any other route?

Such were the perplexities and difficulties presenting themselves under every aspect of the case, and discussed by Washington in his correspondence with his accustomed clearness. In this dilemma he sent Generals Parsons and Varnum with a couple of brigades in all haste to Peekskill, and wrote to Generals George Clinton and Putnam; the former to call out the New York militia from Orange and Ulster counties; the latter to summon the militia from Connecticut; and as soon as such reinforce-

ments should be at hand, to despatch four of the strongest Massachusetts regiments to the aid of Ticonderoga; at the same time the expediency was suggested to General Schuyler, of having all the cattle and vehicles removed from such parts of the country which he might think the enemy intended to penetrate.

General Sullivan, moreover, was ordered to advance with his division towards the Highlands as far as Pompton, while Washington moved his own camp back to Morristown, to be ready either to push on to the Highlands, or fall back upon his recent position at Middlebrook, according to the movements of the enemy. "If I can keep General Howe below the Highlands," said he, "I think their schemes will be entirely baffled."

Deserters from Staten Island and New York soon brought word to the camp that transports were being fitted up with berths for horses, and taking in three weeks' supply of water and provender. All this indicated some other destination than that of the Hudson. Lest an attempt on the Eastern States should be intended, Washington sent a circular to their governors to put them on their guard.

In the midst of his various cares, his yeoman soldiery, the Jersey militia, were not forgotten. It was their harvest time; and the State being

evacuated, there was no immediate call for their services; he dismissed, therefore, almost the whole of them to their homes.

Captain Graydon, whose memoirs we have heretofore had occasion to quote, paid a visit to the camp at this juncture, in company with Colonel Miles and Major West, all American prisoners on Long Island, but who had been liberated on parole. Graydon remarks that, to their great surprise, they saw no military parade upon their journey, nor any indication of martial vigor on the part of the country. Here and there a militia man with his contrasted colored cape and facings; doubtless someone who had received his furlough, and was bound home to his farm. Captains, majors, and colonels abounded in the land, but were not to be found at the head of their men.

When he arrived at the camp, he could see nothing which deserved the name of army. "I was told, indeed," remarks he, "that it was much weakened by detachments, and I was glad to find there was some cause for the present paucity of soldiers. I could not doubt, however, that things were going on well. The commander-in-chief and all about him were in excellent spirits." The three officers waited on Washington at his marquee in the evening. In the course of conversation, he asked them

what they conceived to be the objects of General Howe. Colonel Miles replied, a co-operation with the Northern army by means of the Hudson. Washington acknowledged that indications and probabilities tended to that conclusion; nevertheless, he had little doubt the object of Howe was Philadelphia.

Graydon and his companions dined the next day at headquarters; there was a large party, in which were several ladies. Colonel Alexander Hamilton, who, in the preceding month of April, had been received into Washington's family as aide-de-camp, presided at the head of the table, and "acquitted himself," writes Graydon, "with an ease, propriety, and vivacity which gave me the most favorable impression of his talents and accomplishments."

We may here observe that the energy, skill, and intelligence displayed by Hamilton throughout the last year's campaign, whenever his limited command gave him opportunity of evincing them, had won his entrance to headquarters; where his quick discernment and precocious judgment were soon fully appreciated. Strangers were surprised to see a youth, scarce twenty years of age, received into the implicit confidence, and admitted into the gravest counsels of a man like Washington. While his uncommon talents thus commanded

respect, rarely inspired by one of his years, his juvenile appearance and buoyant spirit made him a universal favorite. Harrison, the "old secretary," much his senior, looked upon him with an almost paternal eye, and regarding his diminutive size and towering spirit, used to call him "the little lion"; while Washington would now and then speak of him by the cherishing appellation of "my boy."*

The following is Graydon's amusing account of Wayne, whom he visited at his quarters. "He entertained the most sovereign contempt for the enemy. In his confident way, he affirmed that the two armies had interchanged their original modes of warfare. That for our parts, we had thrown away the shovel, and the British had taken it up; as they dared not face us without the cover of an intrenchment.

* Communicated to the author by the late Mrs. Hamilton.

NOTE.—A veteran officer of the Revolution used to speak in his old days of the occasion on which he first saw Hamilton. It was during the memorable retreat through the Jerseys. "I noticed," said he, "a youth, a mere stripling, small, slender, almost delicate in frame, marching beside a piece of artillery with a cocked hat pulled down over his eyes, apparently lost in thought, with his hand resting on the cannon, and every now and then patting it as he mused, as if it were a favorite horse, or a pet plaything."

I made some allowance for the fervid manner of the general, who, though unquestionably as brave a man as any in the army, was nevertheless somewhat addicted to the vaunting style of Marshal Villers, a man who, like himself, could fight as well as brag."

Graydon speaks of the motley, shabby clothing of the troops. "Even in General Wayne himself, there was in this particular a considerable falling off. His quondam regimentals as colonel of the 4th battalion were, I think, blue and white, in which he had been accustomed to appear with exemplary neatness; whereas he was now dressed in character for Macheath or Captain Gibbet, in a dingy red coat, with a black rusty cravat and tarnished hat." Wayne was doubtless still rusty from his campaign in the north.

Graydon, during his recent captivity, had been accustomed to the sight of British troops in the completeness of martial array, and looked with a rueful eye on patriotism in rags. From all that he saw at the camp, he suspected affairs were not in a prosperous train, notwithstanding the cheerful countenances at headquarters. There appeared to be a want of animated co-operation both on the part of the government and the people. "General Washington, with the little remnant of his army at Morristown,

seemed left to scuffle for liberty, like another Cato at Utica." *

We will now turn to the North, and lift the curtain for a moment, to give the reader a glance at affairs in that quarter, about which there were such dubious rumors.

* Graydon's *Memoirs*, 282.

Chapter XIII.

British Invasion from Canada—The Plan—Composition of the Invading Army—Schuyler on the Alert—His Speculations as to the Enemy's Designs—Burgoyne on Lake Champlain—His War-Speech to his Indian Allies—Signs of his Approach Descried from Ticonderoga—Correspondence on the Subject between St. Clair, Major Livingston, and Schuyler—Burgoyne Intrenches near Ticonderoga—His Proclamation—Schuyler's Exertions at Albany to Forward Reinforcements—Hears that Ticonderoga is Evacuated—Mysterious Disappearance of St. Clair and his Troops—Amazement and Concern of Washington—Orders Reinforcements to Schuyler at Fort Edward, and to Putnam at Peekskill—Advances with his Main Army to the Clove—His Hopeful Spirit Manifested.

THE armament advancing against Ticonderoga, of which General St. Clair had given intelligence, was not a mere diversion, but a regular invasion; the plan of which had been devised by the king, Lord George Germaine, and General Burgoyne,

the latter having returned to England from Canada in the preceding year. The junction of the two armies—that in Canada and that under General Howe in New York—was considered the speediest mode of quelling the rebellion ; and as the security and good government of Canada required the presence of Governor Sir Guy Carleton, three thousand men were to remain there with him ; the residue of the army was to be employed upon two expeditions ; the one under General Burgoyne, who was to force his way to Albany, the other under Lieutenant-Colonel St. Leger, who was to make a diversion on the Mohawk River.

The invading army was composed of three thousand seven hundred and twenty-four British rank and file, three thousand and sixteen Germans, mostly Brunswickers, two hundred and fifty Canadians, and four hundred Indians ; beside these there were four hundred and seventy-three artillery-men, in all nearly eight thousand men. The army was admirably appointed. Its brass train of artillery was extolled as perhaps the finest ever allotted to an army of the size. General Phillips, who commanded the artillery, had gained great reputation in the wars in Germany. Brigadier-Generals Fraser, Powel, and Hamilton, were

also officers of distinguished merit. So was Major-General the Baron Riedesel, a Brunswicker, who commanded the German troops.

While Burgoyne with the main force proceeded from St. John's, Colonel St. Leger, with a detachment of regulars and Canadians about seven hundred strong, was to land at Oswego, and, guided by Sir John Johnson at the head of his loyalist volunteers, tory refugees from his former neighborhood, and a body of Indians, was to enter the Mohawk country, draw the attention of General Schuyler in that direction, attack Fort Stanwix, and, having ravaged the valley of the Mohawk, rejoin Burgoyne at Albany, where it was expected they would make a triumphant junction with the army of Sir William Howe.

General Burgoyne left St. John's on the 16th of June. Some idea may be formed of his buoyant anticipation of a triumphant progress through the country, by the manifold and lumbering appurtenances of a European camp with which his army was encumbered. In this respect he had committed the same error in his campaign through a wilderness of lakes and forests, that had once embarrassed the unfortunate Braddock in his march across the mountains of Virginia.

Schuyler was uncertain as to the plans and

force of the enemy. If information gathered from scouts and a captured spy might be relied on, Ticonderoga would soon be attacked; but he trusted the garrison was sufficient to maintain it. This information he transmitted to Washington from Fort Edward on the 16th, the very day that Burgoyne embarked at St. John's.

On the following day Schuyler was at Ticonderoga. The works were not in such a state of forwardness as he had anticipated, owing to the tardy arrival of troops, and the want of a sufficient number of artificers. The works in question related chiefly to Mount Independence, a high circular hill on the east side of the lake, immediately opposite to the old fort, and considered the most defensible. A star fort with pickets crowned the summit of the hill, which was table land; half way down the side of the hill was a battery, and at the foot were strongly intrenched works well mounted with cannon. Here the French General de Fermois, who had charge of this fort, was posted.

As this part of Lake Champlain is narrow, a connection was kept up between the two forts by a floating bridge, supported on twenty-two sunken piers in caissons, formed of very strong timber. Between the piers were separate floats, fifty feet long and twelve feet wide, strongly connected by iron chains and rivets. On the

north side of the bridge was a boom, composed of large pieces of timber, secured by riveted bolts, and beside this was a double iron chain with links an inch and a half square. The bridge, boom, and chain were four hundred yards in length. This immense work, the labor of months, on which no expense had been spared, was intended, while it afforded a communication between the two forts, to protect the upper part of the lake, presenting, under cover of their guns, a barrier, which it was presumed no hostile ship would be able to break through.

Having noted the state of affairs and the wants of the garrison, Schuyler hastened to Fort George, whence he sent on provisions for upwards of sixty days; and from the banks of the Hudson additional carpenters and working cattle. "Business will go in better train, and I hope with much more spirit," writes he to Congress; "and I trust we shall still be able to put everything in such order as to give the enemy a good reception, and, I hope, a repulse, should they attempt a real attack, which I conjecture will not be soon, if at all; although I expect they will approach with their fleet to keep us in alarm, and to draw our attention from other quarters where they may mean a real attack."

His idea was that, while their fleet and a small body of troops might appear before Ticonderoga, and keep up continual alarms, the main army might march from St. François and St. John's towards the Connecticut River, and make an attempt on the Eastern States. "A manœuvre of this kind," observes he, "would be in General Burgoyne's way, and, if successful, would be attended with much honor to him. . . . I am the more confirmed in this conjecture, as the enemy cannot be ignorant how very difficult, if not impossible, it will be for them to penetrate to Albany, unless in losing Ticonderoga we should lose not only all our cannon, but most of the army designed for this department."

In the meantime, Burgoyne, with his amphibious and semi-barbarous armaments was advancing up the lake. On the 21st of June he encamped at the River Boquet, several miles north of Crown Point; here he gave a war feast to his savage allies, and made them a speech in that pompous and half poetical vein in which it is the absurd practice to address our savages, and which is commonly reduced to flat prose by their interpreters. At the same time he was strenuous in enjoining humanity toward prisoners, dwelling on the difference between ordinary wars carried on against

a common enemy, and this against a country in rebellion, where the hostile parties were of the same blood, and the loyal subjects of the crown might be confounded with the rebellious. It was a speech intended to excite their ardor, but restrain their cruelty, a difficult medium to attain with Indian warriors.

The garrison of Ticonderoga, meanwhile, were anxiously on the lookout. Their fortress, built on a hill, commanded an extensive prospect over the bright and beautiful lake and its surrounding forests, but there were long points and promontories at a distance to intercept the view.

By the 24th, scouts began to bring in word of the approaching foe. Bark canoes had been seen filled with white men and savages. Then three vessels under sail, and one at anchor, above Split Rock, and behind it the radeau *Thunderer*, noted in the last year's naval fight. Anon came word of encampments sufficient for a large body of troops, on both sides of Gilliland's Creek, with bateaux plying about its waters, and painted warriors gliding about in canoes; while a number of smokes rising out of the forest at a distance beyond, gave signs of an Indian camp.

St. Clair wrote word of all this to Schuyler, and that it was supposed the enemy were wait-

ing the arrival of more force; he did not, however, think they intended to attack, but to harass, for the purpose of giving confidence to the Indians.

Schuyler transmitted a copy of St. Clair's letter to Washington. "If the enemy's object is not to attack Ticonderoga," writes he, "I suspect their movement is intended to cover an attempt on New Hampshire, or the Mohawk River, or to cut off the communication between Fort Edward and Fort George, or perhaps all three, the more to distract us and divide our force." He urged Washington for reinforcements as soon as possible. At the same time he wrote to St. Clair, to keep scouts on the east side of the lake near the road leading from St. John's to New Hampshire, and on the west, on the road leading to the north branch of the Hudson. This done, he hastened to Albany to forward reinforcements and bring up the militia.

While there, he received word from St. Clair, that the enemy's fleet and army were arrived at Crown Point, and had sent off detachments, one up Otter Creek to cut off the communication by Skenesborough; and another on the west side of the lake to cut off Fort George. It was evident a real attack on Ticonderoga was intended. Claims for assistance came hur-

rying on from other quarters. A large force (St. Leger's) was said to be arrived at Oswego, and Sir John Johnson with his myrmidons on his way to attack Fort Schuyler, the garrison of which was weak and poorly supplied with cannon.

Schuyler bestirs himself with his usual zeal amid the thickening alarms. He writes urgent letters to the Committee of Safety of New York, to General Putnam at Peekskill, to the governor of Connecticut, to the president of Massachusetts, to the committee of Berkshire, and lastly to Washington, stating the impending dangers and imploring reinforcements. He exhorts General Herkimer to keep the militia of Tryon County in readiness to protect the western frontier and to check the inroad of Sir John Johnson, and he assures St. Clair that he will move to his aid with the militia of New York, as soon as he can collect them.

Dangers accumulate at Ticonderoga according to advices from St. Clair (28th). Seven of the enemy's vessels are lying at Crown Point; the rest of their fleet is probably but a little lower down. Morning guns are heard distinctly at various places. Some troops have debarked and encamped at Chimney Point. There is no prospect, he says, of being able to defend Ticonderoga unless militia come in, and he has

thought of calling in those from Berkshire. "Should the enemy invest and blockade us," writes he, "we are infallibly ruined; we shall be obliged to abandon this side (of the lake), and then they will soon force the other from us, nor do I see that a retreat will in any shape be practicable. Everything, however, shall be done that is practicable to frustrate the enemy's designs; but what can be expected from troops ill-armed, naked, and unaccoutred?"

Schuyler's aide-de-camp, Major Livingston,* who had been detained at Ticonderoga by indisposition, writes to him (June 30th) in a different vein, and presents a young man's view of affairs.

"The enemy, after giving us several alarms, made their appearance early this morning off Three Mile Point, in eighteen gunboats, and, about nine, landed a party of two or three hundred Indians and Canadians. These soon fell in with a scout from us, but being superior in number, obliged them to retreat, though without any loss on our side. The Indians then marched to the front of the French lines, drove in a picket guard, and came so near as to wound two men who were standing behind the

* Henry Brockholst Livingston: in after years judge of the Supreme Court of the United States.

works. They have stopped the communication between this and Lake George.

"We have a fair view of their boats, but cannot see that they have brought many regulars with them. At least the number of redcoats in them is very small. The wind having been contrary for several days, has prevented their fleet from coming up. The first fair breeze I shall expect to see them. Many bets are depending that we shall be attacked in the course of this week. Our troops are determined, and in great spirits. They wish to be permitted to drive the savages from Three Mile Point, but General St. Clair chooses to act on the sure side, and risk nothing. The few alarms we have had have been of great service in making the men alert and vigilant; but I am afraid the enemy will repeat them so frequently as to throw them into their former indolence and inattention. General St. Clair has taken the precaution to move most of the stores to the mount [Independence]. This moment two ships and as many sloops have hove in sight. The spirits of the men seem to increase in proportion to the number of the enemy.

"I cannot but esteem myself fortunate that indisposition prevented my returning with you, as it has given me an opportunity of being

present at a battle, in which I promise myself the pleasure of seeing our army flushed with victory.'' *

The enemy came advancing up the lake on the 30th, their main body under Burgoyne on the west side, the German reserve under Baron Riedesel on the east; communication being maintained by frigates and gunboats, which, in a manner, kept pace between them. It was a magnificent array of warlike means; and the sound of drum and trumpet along the shores, and now and then the thundering of a cannon from the ships, were singularly in contrast with the usual silence of a region little better than a wilderness.

On the first of July, Burgoyne encamped four miles north of Ticonderoga, and began to intrench, and to throw a boom across the lake. His advanced guard under General Fraser took post at Three Mile Point, and the ships anchored just out of gunshot of the fort.

Here he issued a proclamation still more magniloquent than his speech to the Indians, denouncing woe to all who should persist in rebellion, and laying particular stress upon his means, with the aid of the Indians, to over-

* Letter of Major Livingston to General Schuyler, MS.

take the hardiest enemies of Great Britain and America, wherever they might lurk.

General St. Clair was a gallant Scotchman, who had seen service in the old French war as well as in this, and beheld the force arrayed against him without dismay. It is true his garrison was not so numerous as it had been represented to Washington, not exceeding three thousand five hundred men, of whom nine hundred were militia. They were badly equipped also, and few had bayonets; yet as Major Livingston reported, they were in good heart. St. Clair confided, however, in the strength of his position and the works which had been constructed in connection with it, and trusted he should be able to resist any attempt to take it by storm.

Schuyler at this time was at Albany, sending up reinforcements of continental troops and militia, and awaiting the arrival of further reinforcements, for which sloops had been sent down to Peekskill.

He was endeavoring also to provide for the security of the department in other quarters. The savages had been scalping in the neighborhood of Fort Schuyler; a set of renegade Indians were harassing the settlements on the Susquehanna; and the threatenings of Brant, the famous Indian chief, and the prospect of a

British inroad by the way of Oswego, had spread terror through Tryon County, the inhabitants of which called upon him for support.

"The enemy are harassing us in every quarter of this department," writes he. "I am, however, happily, thank God, in full health and spirits to enable me to extend my attention to those various quarters, and hope we shall all do well." *

The enemy's manœuvre of intrenching themselves and throwing a boom across the lake, of which St. Clair informed him, made him doubt of their being in great force, or intending a serious attack. "I shall have great hopes," writes he to St. Clair, "if General Burgoyne continues in the vicinity of your post until we get up, and dares risk an engagement, we shall give a good account of him." †

To General Herkimer, who commanded the militia in Tryon County, he writes in the same encouraging strain. "From intelligence which I have just now received from Ticonderoga, I am not very apprehensive that any great effort will be made against the Mohawk River. I shall, however, keep a watchful eye to the preservation of the western quarter, and have

* Letter to the Hon. George Clymer.

† Schuyler's Letter Book.

therefore directed Colonel Van Schaick to remain in Tryon County with the [continental] troops under his command.

"If we act with vigor and spirit, we have nothing to fear; but if once despondency takes place, the worst consequences are to be apprehended. It is, therefore, incumbent on you to labor to keep up the spirits of the people."

In the meantime he awaited the arrival of the troops from Peekskill with impatience. On the 5th they had not appeared. "The moment they do," writes he, "I shall move with them. If they do not arrive by to-morrow, I go without them, and will do the best I can with the militia." He actually did set out at 8 o'clock on the morning of the 7th.

Such was the state of affairs in the north, of which Washington from time to time had been informed. An attack on Ticonderoga appeared to be impending; but as the garrison was in good heart, the commander resolute, and troops were on the way to reinforce him, a spirited, and perhaps successful resistance was anticipated by Washington. His surprise may therefore be imagined, on receiving a letter from Schuyler dated July 7th, conveying the astounding intelligence that Ticonderoga was evacuated!

Schuyler had just received the news at Still-

water on the Hudson, when on his way with reinforcements for the fortress. The first account was so vague that Washington hoped it might prove incorrect. It was confirmed by another letter from Schuyler, dated on the 9th at Fort Edward. A part of the garrison had been pursued by a detachment of the enemy as far as Fort Anne in that neighborhood, where the latter had been repulsed; as to St. Clair himself and the main part of his forces, they had thrown themselves into the forest, and nothing was known what had become of them!

"I am here," writes Schuyler, "at the head of a handful of men, not above fifteen hundred, with little ammunition, not above five rounds to a man, having neither balls nor lead to make any. The country is in the deepest consternation; no carriages to remove the stores from Fort George, which I expect every moment to hear is attacked; and what adds to my distress is, that a report prevails that I had given orders for the evacuation of Ticonderoga."

Washington was totally at a loss to account for St. Clair's movement. To abandon a fortress which he had recently pronounced so defensible: and to abandon it apparently without firing a gun! and then the strange uncer-

tainty as to his subsequent fortunes, and the whereabouts of himself and the main body of his troops! "The affair," writes Washington, "is so mysterious that it baffles even conjecture."

His first attention was to supply the wants of General Schuyler. An express was sent to Springfield for musket cartridges, gunpowder, lead, and cartridge papers. Ten pieces of artillery with harness and proper officers were to be forwarded from Peekskill, as well as intrenching tools. Of tents he had none to furnish, neither could heavy cannon be spared from the defense of the Highlands.

Six hundred recruits, on their march from Massachusetts to Peekskill, were ordered to repair to the reinforcement of Schuyler; this was all the force that Washington could venture at this moment to send to his aid; but this addition to his troops, supposing those under St. Clair should have come in, and any number of militia have turned out, would probably form an army equal, if not superior, to that said to be under Burgoyne. Besides, it was Washington's idea that the latter would suspend his operations until General Howe should make a movement in concert. Supposing that movement would be an immediate attempt against the Highlands, he ordered

Sullivan with his division to Peekskill to reinforce General Putnam. At the same time he advanced with his main army to Pompton, and thence to the Clove, a rugged defile through the Highlands on the west side of the Hudson. Here he encamped within eighteen miles of the river, to watch, and be at hand to oppose the designs of Sir William Howe, whatever might be their direction.

On the morning of the 14th came another letter from Schuyler, dated Fort Edward, July 10th. He had that morning received the first tidings of St. Clair and his missing troops, and of their being fifty miles east of him.

Washington hailed the intelligence with that hopeful spirit which improved every ray of light in the darkest moments. "I am happy to hear," writes he, "that General St. Clair and his army are not in the hands of the enemy. I really feared they had become prisoners. The evacuation of Ticonderoga and Mount Independence is an event of chagrin and surprise not apprehended, nor within the compass of my reasoning. . . . This stroke is severe indeed, and has distressed us much. But, notwithstanding things at present have a dark and gloomy aspect, I hope a spirited opposition will check the progress of General Burgoyne's army, and that the confidence derived from his

success, will hurry him into measures that will in their consequences be favorable to us. *We should never despair. Our situation before has been unpromising and has changed for the better, so I trust it will again. If new difficulties arise, we must only put forth new exertions, and proportion our efforts to the exigency of the times.*"

His spirit of candor and moderation is evinced in another letter. "I will not condemn or even pass censure upon any officer unheard, but I think it a duty which General St. Clair owes to his own character, to insist upon an opportunity of giving his reasons for his sudden evacuation of a post, which, but a few days before, he, by his own letters, thought tenable, at least for a while. People at a distance are apt to form wrong conjectures, and if General St. Clair has good reasons for the step he has taken, I think the sooner he justifies himself the better. I have mentioned these matters, because he may not know that his conduct is looked upon as very unaccountable by all ranks of people in this part of the country. If he is reprehensible, the public have an undoubted right to call for that justice which is due from an officer, who betrays or gives up his post in an unwarrantable manner."*

Having stated the various measures adopted

* Letter to Schuyler, 18th July, 1777.

by Washington for the aid of the Northern army at this critical juncture, we will leave him at his encampment in the Clove, anxiously watching the movements of the fleet and the lower army, while we turn to the north, to explain the mysterious retreat of General St. Clair.

Chapter XIII.

Particulars of the Evacuation—Indian Scouts in the Vicinity of the Fort—Outposts Abandoned by St. Clair—Burgoyne Secures Mount Hope—Invests the Fortress — Seizes and Occupies Sugar Hill—The Forts Overlooked and in Imminent Peril—Determination to Evacuate—Plan of Retreat—Part of the Garrison Depart for Skenesborough in the Flotilla—St. Clair Crosses with the Rest to Fort Independence—A Conflagration Reveals his Retreat —The British Camp Aroused—Fraser Pursues St. Clair — Burgoyne with his Squadron Makes after the Flotilla—Part of the Fugitives Overtaken—Flight of the Remainder to Fort Anne—Skirmish of Colonel Long—Retreat to Fort Edward—St. Clair at Castleton — Attack of his Rear-Guard—Fall of Colonel Francis—Desertion of Colonel Hale—St. Clair Reaches Fort Edward—Consternation of the Country—Exultation of the British.

IN the accounts given in the preceding chapter of the approach of Burgoyne to Ticonderoga, it was stated that he had encamped four miles north of the fortress, and intrenched himself. On the 2d of July,

Indian scouts made their appearance in the vicinity of a blockhouse and some outworks about the strait or channel leading to Lake George. As General St. Clair did not think the garrison sufficient to defend all the outposts, these works with some adjacent sawmills were set on fire and abandoned. The extreme left of Ticonderoga was weak, and might easily be turned; a post had therefore been established in the preceding year, nearly half a mile in advance of the old French lines, on an eminence to the north of them. General St. Clair, through singular remissness, had neglected to secure it. Burgoyne soon discovered this neglect, and hastened to detach Generals Phillips and Fraser with a body of infantry and light artillery, to take possession of this post. They did so without opposition. Heavy guns were mounted upon it; Fraser's whole corps was stationed there; the post commanded the communication by land and water with Lake George, so as to cut off all supplies from that quarter. In fact, such were the advantages expected from this post, thus neglected by St. Clair, that the British gave it the significant name of Mount Hope.

The enemy now proceeded gradually to invest Ticonderoga. A line of troops was drawn from the western part of Mount Hope round

to Three Mile Point, where General Fraser was posted with the advance guard, while General Riedesel encamped with the German reserve in a parallel line, on the opposite side of Lake Champlain, at the foot of Mount Independence. For two days the enemy occupied themselves in making their advances and securing these positions, regardless of a cannonade kept up by the American batteries.

St. Clair began to apprehend that a regular siege was intended, which would be more difficult to withstand than a direct assault; he kept up a resolute aspect, however, and went about among his troops, encouraging them with the hope of a successful resistance, but enjoining incessant vigilance, and punctual attendance at the alarm posts at morning and evening roll-call.

With all the pains and expense lavished by the Americans to render these works impregnable, they had strangely neglected the master key by which they were all commanded. This was Sugar Hill, a rugged height, the termination of a mountain ridge which separates Lake Champlain from Lake George. It stood to the south of Ticonderoga, beyond the narrow channel which connected the two lakes, and rose precipitously from the waters of Champlain to the height of six hundred feet. It

had been pronounced by the Americans too distant to be dangerous. Colonel Trumbull, some time an aide-de-camp to Washington, and subsequently an adjutant, had proved the contrary in the preceding year, by throwing a shot from a six-pounder in the fort nearly to the summit. It was then pronounced inaccessible to an enemy. This Trumbull had likewise proved to be an error, by clambering with Arnold and Wayne to the top, whence they perceived that a practicable road for artillery might easily and readily be made. Trumbull had insisted that this was the true point for the fort, commanding the neighboring heights, the narrow parts of both lakes, and the communication between. A small, but strong fort here, with twenty-five heavy guns and five hundred men, would be as efficient as one hundred guns and ten thousand men on the extensive works of Ticonderoga.* His suggestions were disregarded; their wisdom was now to be proved.

The British General Phillips, on taking his position, had regarded the hill with a practised eye. He caused it to be reconnoitered by a skilful engineer. The report was, that it overlooked, and had the entire command of Fort Ticonderoga and Fort Independence, being

* Trumbull's *Autobiography*, p. 32.

about fourteen hundred yards from the former, and fifteen hundred from the latter; that the ground could be levelled for cannon, and a road cut up the defiles of the mountain in four-and-twenty hours.

Measures were instantly taken to plant a battery on that height. While the American garrisons were entirely engaged in a different direction, cannonading Mount Hope and the British lines without material effect, and without provoking a reply, the British troops were busy throughout the day and night cutting a road through rocks and trees and up rugged defiles. Guns, ammunition, and stores, all were carried up the hill in the night; the cannon were hauled up from tree to tree, and before morning the ground was levelled for the battery on which they were to be mounted. To this work, thus achieved by a *coup de main*, they gave the name of Fort Defiance.

On the 5th of July, to their astonishment and consternation, the garrison beheld a legion of red-coats on the summit of this hill, constructing works which must soon lay the fortress at their mercy.

In this sudden and appalling emergency, General St. Clair called a council of war. What was to be done? The batteries from this new fort would probably be open the next

day: by that time Ticonderoga might be completely invested, and the whole garrison exposed to capture. They had not force sufficient for one half the works, and General Schuyler, supposed to be at Albany, could afford them no relief. The danger was imminent; delay might prove fatal. It was unanimously determined to evacuate both Ticonderoga and Mount Independence that very night, and retreat to Skenesborough (now Whitehall), at the upper part of the lake, about thirty miles distant, where there was a stockaded fort. The main body of the army, led by General St. Clair, were to cross to Mount Independence and push for Skenesborough by land, taking a circuitous route through the woods on the east side of the lake, by way of Castleton.

The cannon, stores, and provisions, together with the wounded and the women, were to be embarked on board of two hundred bateaux, and conducted to the upper extremity of the lake, by Colonel Long with six hundred men; two hundred of whom in five armed galleys were to form a rear-guard.

It was now three o'clock in the afternoon; yet all the preparations were to be made for the coming night, and that with as little bustle and movement as possible; for they were overlooked by Fort Defiance, and their intentions might

be suspected. Everything, therefore, was done quietly, but alertly; in the meantime, to amuse the enemy, a cannonade was kept up every half hour toward the new battery on the hill. As soon as the evening closed, and their movements could not be discovered, they began in all haste to load the boats. Such of the cannon as could not be taken were ordered to be spiked. It would not do to knock off their trunnions, lest the noise should awaken suspicions. In the hurry several were left uninjured. The lights in the garrison being previously extinguished, their tents were struck and put on board of the boats, and the women and the sick embarked. Everything was conducted with such silence and address, that, although it was a moonlight night, the flotilla departed undiscovered, and was soon under the shadows of the mountains and overhanging forests.

The retreat by land was not conducted with equal discretion and mystery. General St. Clair had crossed over the bridge to the Vermont side of the lake by three o'clock in the morning, and set forward with his advance through the woods toward Hubbardton; but, before the rear-guard under Colonel Francis got in motion, the house at Fort Independence, which had been occupied by the French Gen-

eral de Fermois, was set on fire—by his orders, it is said, though we are loth to charge him with such indiscretion, such gross and wanton violation of the plan of retreat. The consequences were disastrous. The British sentries at Mount Hope were astonished by a conflagration suddenly lighting up Mount Independence, and revealing the American troops in full retreat; for the rear-guard, disconcerted by this sudden exposure, pressed forward for the woods in the utmost haste and confusion.

The drums beat to arms in the British camp. Alarm guns were fired from Mount Hope: General Fraser dashed into Ticonderoga with his pickets, giving orders for his brigade to arm in all haste and follow. By daybreak he had hoisted the British flag over the deserted fortress; before sunrise he had passed the bridge, and was in full pursuit of the American rear-guard. Burgoyne was roused from his morning slumbers on board of the frigate *Royal George*, by the alarm guns from Fort Hope, and a message from General Fraser, announcing the double retreat of the Americans by land and water. From the quarter-deck of the frigate he soon had confirmation of the news. The British colors were flying on Fort Ticonderoga, and Fraser's troops were glittering on the opposite shore.

Burgoyne's measures were prompt. General Riedesel was ordered to follow and support Fraser with a part of the German troops; garrisons were thrown into Ticonderoga and Mount Independence; the main part of the army was embarked on board of the frigates and gunboats; the floating bridge with its boom and chain, which had cost months to construct, was broken through by nine o'clock; when Burgoyne set out with his squadron in pursuit of the flotilla.

We left the latter making its retreat on the preceding evening towards Skenesborough. The lake above Ticonderoga becomes so narrow that, in those times, it was frequently called South River. Its beautiful waters wound among mountains covered with primeval forests. The bateaux, deeply laden, made their way slowly in a lengthened line; sometimes under the shadows of the mountains, sometimes in the gleam of moonlight. The rear-guard of armed galleys followed at wary distance. No immediate pursuit, however, was apprehended. The floating bridge was considered an effectual impediment to the enemy's fleet. Gayety, therefore, prevailed among the fugitives. They exulted in the secrecy and dexterity with which they had managed their retreat, and amused themselves with the idea

of what would be the astonishment of the enemy at daybreak. The officers regaled merrily on the stores saved from Ticonderoga, and knocking off the necks of bottles of wine, drank a pleasant *reveille* to General Burgoyne.

About three o'clock in the afternoon of the succeeding day, the heavily laden bateaux arrived at Skenesborough. The disembarkation had scarcely commenced when the thundering of artillery was heard from below. Could the enemy be at hand? It was even so. The British gunboats having pushed on in advance of the frigates, had overtaken and were firing upon the galleys. The latter defended themselves for a while, but at length two struck, and three were blown up. The fugitives from them brought word that the British ships not being able to come up, troops and Indians were landing from them and scrambling up the hills; intending to get in the rear of the fort and cut off all retreat.

All now was consternation and confusion. The bateaux, the storehouses, the fort, the mill were all set on fire, and a general flight took place toward Fort Anne, about twelve miles distant. Some made their way in boats up Wood Creek, a winding stream. The main body, under Colonel Long, retreated by a narrow defile cut through the woods, harassed all

night by alarms that the Indians were close in pursuit. Both parties reached Fort Anne by daybreak. It was a small picketed fort, near the junction of Wood Creek and East Creek, about sixteen miles from Fort Edward. General Schuyler arrived at the latter place on the following day. The number of troops with him was inconsiderable, but, hearing of Colonel Long's situation, he immediately sent him a small reinforcement, with provisions and ammunition, and urged him to maintain his post resolutely.

On the same day Colonel Long's scouts brought in word that there were British redcoats approaching. They were in fact a regiment under Lieutenant-Colonel Hill, detached from Skenesborough by Burgoyne in pursuit of the fugitives. Long sallied forth to meet them; posting himself at a rocky defile, where there was a narrow pathway along the border of Wood Creek. As the enemy advanced he opened a heavy fire upon them in front, while a part of his troops crossing and recrossing the creek, and availing themselves of their knowledge of the ground, kept up a shifting attack from the woods in flank and rear. Apprehensive of being surrounded, the British took post upon a high hill to their right, where they were warmly besieged for nearly two hours, and,

according to their own account, would certainly have been forced, had not some of their Indian allies arrived and set up the much-dreaded war-whoop. It was answered with three cheers by the British upon the hill. This changed the fortune of the day. The Americans had nearly expended their ammunition, and had not enough left to cope with this new enemy. They retreated, therefore, to Fort Anne, carrying with them a number of prisoners, among whom were a captain and surgeon. Supposing the troops under Colonel Hill an advance guard of Burgoyne's army, they set fire to the fort and pushed on to Fort Edward; where they gave the alarm that the main force of the enemy was close after them, and that no one knew what had become of General St. Clair and the troops who had retreated with him. We shall now clear up the mystery of his movements.

His retreat through the woods from Mount Independence continued the first day until night, when he arrived at Castleton, thirty miles from Ticonderoga. His rear-guard halted about six miles short, at Hubbardton, to await the arrival of stragglers. It was composed of three regiments under Colonels Seth Warner, Francis, and Hale; in all about thirteen hundred men.

Early the next morning, a sultry morning

of July, while they were taking their breakfast, they were startled by the report of fire-arms. Their sentries had discharged their muskets, and came running in with word that the enemy were at hand.

It was General Fraser, with his advance of eight hundred and fifty men, who had pressed forward in the latter part of the night, and now attacked the Americans with great spirit, notwithstanding their superiority in numbers; in fact, he expected to be promptly reinforced by Riedesel and his Germans. The Americans met the British with great spirit; but at the very commencement of the action, Colonel Hale, with a detachment placed under his command to protect the rear, gave way, leaving Warner and Francis with but seven hundred men to bear the brunt of the battle. These posted themselves behind logs and trees in "backwoods" style, whence they kept up a destructive fire, and were evidently gaining the advantage, when General Riedesel came pressing into the action with his German troops, drums beating and colors flying. There was now an impetuous charge with the bayonet. Colonel Francis was among the first who fell, gallantly fighting at the head of his men. The Americans, thinking the whole German force upon them, gave way and fled, leaving the

ground covered with their dead and wounded. Many others who had been wounded perished in the woods, where they had taken refuge. Their whole loss in killed, wounded, and taken was upwards of three hundred; that of the enemy one hundred and eighty-three. Several officers were lost on both sides. Among those wounded of the British was Major Ackland of the grenadiers, of whose further fortunes in the war we shall have to speak hereafter.

The noise of the firing when the action commenced had reached General St. Clair at Castleton. He immediately sent orders to two militia regiments which were in his rear, and within two miles of the battle-ground, to hasten to the assistance of his rear-guard. They refused to obey, and hurried forward to Castleton. At this juncture St. Clair received information of Burgoyne's arrival at Skenesborough, and the destruction of the American works there: fearing to be intercepted at Fort Anne, he immediately changed his route, struck into the woods on his left, and directed his march to Rutland, leaving word for Warner to follow him. The latter overtook him two days afterwards, with his shattered force reduced to ninety men. As to Colonel Hale, who had pressed towards Castleton at the beginning of the action, he and his men were overtaken the

same day by the enemy, and the whole party captured, without making any fight. It has been alleged in his excuse, with apparent justice, that he and a large portion of his men were in feeble health, and unfit for action; for his own part, he died while yet a prisoner, and never had the opportunity which he sought, to vindicate himself before a court-martial.

On the 12th St. Clair reached Fort Edward, his troops haggard and exhausted by their long retreat through the woods. Such is the story of the catastrophe at Fort Ticonderoga, which caused so much surprise and concern to Washington, and of the seven days' mysterious disappearance of St. Clair, which kept every one in the most painful suspense.

The loss of artillery, ammunition, provisions, and stores, in consequence of the evacuation of these northern posts, was prodigious; but the worst effect was the consternation spread throughout the country. A panic prevailed at Albany, the people running about as if distracted, sending off their goods and furniture.* The great barriers of the North, it was said, were broken through, and there was nothing to check the triumphant career of the enemy.

* MS. Letter of Richard Varick to Schuyler.

The invading army, both officers and men, according to a British writer of the time, "were highly elated with their fortune, and deemed that and their prowess to be irresistible. They regarded their enemy with the greatest contempt, and considered their own toils to be nearly at an end, and Albany already in their hands."

In England, too, according to the same author, the joy and exultation were extreme; not only at court, but with all those who hoped or wished the unqualified subjugation and unconditional submission of the colonies. "The loss in reputation was greater to the Americans," adds he, "and capable of more fatal consequences, than that of ground, of posts, of artillery, or of men. All the contemptuous and most degrading charges which had been made by their enemies, of their wanting the resolution and abilities of men, even in defense of what was dear to them, were now repeated and believed. . . . It was not difficult to diffuse an opinion that the war, in effect, was over, and that any further resistance would render the terms of their submission worse. Such," he concludes, "were some of the immediate effects of the loss of those grand keys of North America, Ticonderoga, and the lakes." *

* *Hist. Civil War in America*, vol. i., p. 283.

Chapter XIV.

Capture of General Prescott—Proffered in Exchange for Lee—Reinforcements to Schuyler—Arnold Sent to the North—Eastern Militia to Repair to Saratoga—Further Reinforcements—Generals Lincoln and Arnold Recommended for Particular Service—Washington's Measures and Suggestions for the Northern Campaign—British Fleet Puts to Sea—Conjectures as to its Destination—A Feigned Letter—Appearance and Disappearance of the Fleet—Orders and Counter-Orders of Washington—Encamps at Germantown—Anxiety for the Security of the Highlands—George Clinton on Guard—Call on Connecticut.

A SPIRITED exploit to the eastward was performed during the prevalence of adverse news from the North. General Prescott had command of the British forces in Rhode Island. His harsh treatment of Colonel Ethan Allen, and his haughty and arrogant conduct on various occasions, had rendered him peculiarly odious to

the Americans. Lieutenant-Colonel Barton, who was stationed with a force of Rhode Island militia on the mainland, received word that Prescott was quartered at a country house near the western shore of the island, about four miles from Newport, totally unconscious of danger, though in a very exposed situation. He determined, if possible, to surprise and capture him. Forty resolute men joined him in the enterprise. Embarking at night in two boats at Warwick Neck, they pulled quietly across the bay with muffled oars, undiscovered by the ships of war and guard-boats; landed in silence; eluded the vigilance of the guard stationed near the house; captured the sentry at the door, and surprised the general in his bed. His aide-de-camp leaped from the window, but was likewise taken. Colonel Barton returned with equal silence and address, and arrived safe at Warwick with his prisoners. A sword was voted to him by Congress, and he received a colonel's commission in the regular army.

Washington hailed the capture of Prescott as a peculiarly fortunate circumstance, furnishing him with an equivalent for General Lee. He accordingly wrote to Sir William Howe, proposing the exchange. "This proposition," writes he, "being agreeable to the letter and

spirit of the agreement subsisting between us, will, I hope, have your approbation. I am the more induced to expect it, as it will not only remove one ground of controversy between us, but in its consequences effect the exchanges of Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell and the Hessian officers, for a like number of ours of equal rank in your possession."

No immediate reply was received to this letter, Sir William Howe being at sea; in the meantime Prescott remained in durance. "I would have him genteelly accommodated, but strongly guarded," writes Washington. "I would not admit him to parole, as General Howe has not thought proper to grant General Lee that indulgence." *

Washington continued his anxious exertions to counteract the operations of the enemy; forwarding artillery and ammunition to Schuyler, with all the camp furniture that could be spared from his own encampment and from Peekskill. A part of Nixon's brigade was all the reinforcement he could afford in his present situation. "To weaken this army more than is prudent," writes he, "would perhaps bring destruction upon it, and I look upon the keeping it upon a respectable footing as the only

* Letter to Governor Trumbull. *Correspondence of the Revolution*, vol. i., Sparks.

means of preventing a junction of Howe's and Burgoyne's armies, which, if effected, may have the most fatal consequences."

Schuyler had earnestly desired the assistance of an active officer well acquainted with the country. Washington sent him Arnold. "I need not," writes he, "enlarge upon his well-known activity, conduct, and bravery. The proofs he has given of all these have gained him the confidence of the public and of the army, the Eastern troops in particular."

The question of rank, about which Arnold was so tenacious, was yet unsettled, and though, had his promotion been regular, he would have been superior in command to General St. Clair, he assured Washington that, on the present occasion, his claim should create no dispute.

Schuyler, in the meantime, aided by Kosciuszko the Pole, who was engineer in his department, had selected two positions on Moses Creek, four miles below Fort Edward; where the troops which had retreated from Ticonderoga, and part of the militia, were throwing up works.

To impede the advance of the enemy, he had caused trees to be felled into Wood Creek, so as to render it unnavigable, and the roads between Fort Edward and Fort Anne to be broken

up; the cattle in that direction to be brought away, and the forage destroyed. He had drawn off the garrison from Fort George, who left the buildings in flames. "Strengthened by that garrison, who are in good health," writes he, "and if the militia, who are here, or an equal number, can be prevailed on to stay, and the enemy give me a few days more, which I think they will be obliged to do, I shall not be apprehensive that they will be able to force the posts I am about to occupy."

Washington cheered on his faithful coadjutor. His reply to Schuyler (July 22d) was full of that confident hope, founded on sagacious forecast, with which he was prone to animate his generals in times of doubt and difficulty. "Though our affairs for some days past have worn a dark and gloomy aspect, I yet look forward to a fortunate and happy change. I trust General Burgoyne's army will meet sooner or later an effectual check, and, as I suggested before, that the success he has had will precipitate his ruin. From your accounts, he appears to be pursuing that line of conduct, which, of all others, is most favorable to us; I mean acting in detachment. This conduct will certainly give room for enterprise on our part, and expose his parties to great hazard. Could we be so happy as to cut one of them off, sup-

posing it should not exceed four, five, or six hundred men, it would inspirit the people, and do away much of their present anxiety. In such an event they would lose sight of past misfortunes, and, urged at the same time by a regard to their own security, they would fly to arms and afford every aid in their power."

While he thus suggested bold enterprises, he cautioned Schuyler not to repose too much confidence in the works he was projecting, so as to collect in them a large quantity of stores. "I begin to consider lines as a kind of trap," writes he, "and not to answer the valuable purposes expected from them, unless they are in passes which cannot be avoided by the enemy."

In circulars addressed to the brigadier-generals of militia in the western parts of Massachusetts and Connecticut, he warned them that the evacuation of Ticonderoga had opened a door by which the enemy, unless vigorously opposed, might penetrate the northern part of the State of New York, and the western parts of New Hampshire and Massachusetts, and, forming a junction with General Howe, cut off the communication between the Eastern and Northern States. "It cannot be supposed," adds he, "that the small number of continental troops assembled at Fort Edward, is alone

sufficient to check the progress of the enemy. To the militia, therefore, must we look for support in this time of trial; and I trust that you will immediately upon receipt of this, if you have not done it already, march with at least one third of the militia under your command, and rendezvous at Saratoga, unless directed to some other place by General Schuyler or General Arnold."

Washington now ordered that all the vessels and river craft, not required at Albany, should be sent down to New Windsor and Fishkill, and kept in readiness; for he knew not how soon the movements of General Howe might render it suddenly necessary to transport part of his forces up the Hudson.

Further letters from Schuyler urged the increasing exigencies of his situation. It was harvest time. The militia, impatient at being detained from their rural labors, were leaving him in great numbers. In a council of general officers, it had been thought advisable to give leave of absence to half, lest the whole should depart. He feared those who remained would do so but a few days. The enemy were steadily employed cutting a road toward him from Skenesborough. From the number of horse they were reported to have, and to expect, they might intend to bring their pro-

visions on horseback. If so, they would be able to move with expedition. In this position of affairs, he urged to be reinforced as speedily as possible.

Washington, in reply, informed him that he had ordered a further reinforcement of General Glover's brigade, which was all he could possibly furnish in his own exigencies. He trusted affairs with Schuyler would soon wear a more smiling aspect, that the Eastern States, who were so deeply concerned in the matter, would exert themselves, by effectual succor, to enable him to check the progress of the enemy, and repel a danger by which they were immediately threatened. From the information he had received, he supposed the force of the enemy to be little more than five thousand. "They seem," said he, "to be unprovided with wagons to transport the immense quantity of baggage and warlike apparatus, without which they cannot pretend to penetrate the country. You mention their having a great number of horses, but they must nevertheless require a considerable number of wagons, as there are many things which cannot be transported on horses. They can never think of advancing without securing their rear, and the force with which they can act against you, will be greatly reduced by detachments

necessary for that purpose; and as they have to cut out their passage, and to remove the impediments you have thrown in their way, before they can proceed, this circumstance, with the encumbrance they must feel in their baggage, stores, etc., will inevitably retard their march, and give you leisure and opportunity to prepare a good reception for them. . . . I have directed General Lincoln to repair to you as speedily as the state of his health, which is not very perfect, will permit; this gentleman has always supported the character of a judicious, brave, active officer, and he is exceedingly popular in the State of Massachusetts, to which he belongs; he will have a degree of influence over the militia which cannot fail of being highly advantageous. I have intended him more particularly for the command of the militia, and I promise myself it will have a powerful tendency to make them turn out with more cheerfulness, and to inspire them with perseverance to remain in the field, and with fortitude and spirit to do their duty while in it." *

Washington highly approved of a measure suggested by Schuyler, of stationing a body of troops somewhere about the Hampshire Grants (Vermont), so as to be in the rear or

* Schuyler's Letter Book.

on the flank of Burgoyne, should he advance. It would make the latter, he said, very circumspect in his advances, if it did not entirely prevent them. It would keep him in continual anxiety for his rear, and oblige him to leave the posts behind him much stronger than he would otherwise do. He advised that General Lincoln should have the command of the corps thus posted, "as no person could be more proper for it."

He recommended, moreover, that in case the enemy should make any formidable movement in the neighborhood of Fort Schuyler (Stanwix), on the Mohawk River, General Arnold, or some other sensible, spirited officer, should be sent to take charge of that post, keep up the spirits of the inhabitants, and cultivate and improve the favorable disposition of the Indians.

The reader will find in the sequel what a propitious effect all these measures had upon the fortunes of the Northern campaign, and with what admirable foresight Washington calculated all its chances. Due credit must also be given to the sagacious counsels and executive energy of Schuyler; who suggested some of the best moves in the campaign, and carried them vigorously into action. Never was Washington more ably and loyally seconded by any of his generals.

But now the attention of the commander-in-chief is called to the seaboard. On the 23d of July, the fleet, so long the object of watchful solicitude, actually put to sea. The force embarked, according to subsequent accounts, consisted of thirty-six British and Hessian battalions, including the light infantry and grenadiers, with a powerful artillery; a New York corps of provincials, or royalists, called the Queen's Rangers, and a regiment of light horse; between fifteen and eighteen thousand men in all. The force left with General Sir Henry Clinton for the protection of New York, consisted of seventeen battalions, a regiment of light horse, and the remainder of the provincial corps.*

The destination of the fleet was still a matter of conjecture. Just after it had sailed, a young man presented himself at one of General Putnam's outposts. He had been a prisoner in New York, he said, but had received his liberty and a large reward on undertaking to be the bearer of a letter from General Howe to Burgoyne. This letter his feelings of patriotism prompted him to deliver up to General Putnam. The letter was immediately transmitted by the general to Washington. It was in the handwriting of Howe, and bore his signature.

* *Civil War in America*, vol. i., p. 250.

In it he informed Burgoyne, that instead of any designs up the Hudson, he was bound to the east against Boston. "If," said he, "according to my expectations, we may succeed in getting possession of it, I shall, without loss of time, proceed to co-operate with you in the defeat of the rebel army opposed to you. Clinton is sufficiently strong to amuse Washington and Putnam. I am now making demonstrations to the southward, which I think will have the full effect in carrying our plan into execution."

Washington at once pronounced the letter a feint. "No stronger proof could be given," said he, "that Howe is not going to the eastward. The letter was evidently intended to fall into our hands. If there were not too great a risk of the dispersion of their fleet, I should think their putting to sea a mere manœuvre to deceive, and the North River still their object. I am persuaded, more than ever, that Philadelphia is the place of destination."

He now set out with his army for the Delaware, ordering Sullivan and Stirling with their divisions to cross the Hudson from Peekskill, and proceed towards Philadelphia. Every movement and order showed his doubt and perplexity, and the circumspection with which he had to proceed. On the 30th, he writes from

Coryell's Ferry, about thirty miles from Philadelphia, to General Gates, who was in that city: "As we are yet uncertain as to the real destination of the enemy, though the Delaware seems the most probable, I have thought it prudent to halt the army at this place, Howell's Ferry, and Trenton, at least till the fleet actually enters the bay and puts the matter beyond a doubt. From hence we can be on the proper ground to oppose them before they can possibly make their arrangements and dispositions for an attack. . . . That the post in the Highlands many not be left too much exposed, I have ordered General Sullivan's division to halt at Morristown, whence it will march southward if there should be occasion, or northward upon the first advice that the enemy should be throwing any force up the North River. General Howe's in a manner abandoning General Burgoyne, is so unaccountable a matter, that, till I am fully assured it is so, *I cannot help casting my eyes continually behind me.* As I shall pay no regard to any flying reports of the appearance of the fleet, I shall expect an account of it from you, the moment you have ascertained it to your satisfaction."

On the 31st, he was informed that the enemy's fleet of two hundred and twenty-eight sail had arrived the day previous at the Capes of Dela-

ware. He instantly wrote to Putnam to hurry on two brigades, which had crossed the river, and to let Schuyler and the commanders in the Eastern States know that they had nothing to fear from Howe, and might bend all their forces, continental and militia, against Burgoyne. In the meantime he moved his camp to Germantown, about six miles from Philadelphia, to be at hand for the defense of that city.

The very next day came word, by express, that the fleet had again sailed out of the Capes, and apparently shaped its course eastward. "This surprising event gives me the greatest anxiety," writes he to Putnam (August 1), "and unless every possible exertion is made, may be productive of the happiest consequences to the enemy and the most injurious to us. . . . The importance of preventing Mr. Howe's getting possession of the Highlands by a *coup de main*, is infinite to America; and, in the present situation of things, every effort that can be thought of must be used. The probability of his going to the eastward is exceedingly small, and the ill effects that might attend such a step inconsiderable in comparison with those that would inevitably attend a successful stroke on the Highlands."

Under this impression Washington sent orders to Sullivan to hasten back with his

division and the two brigades which had recently left Peekskill and to recross the Hudson to that post as speedily as possible, intending to forward the rest of the army with all the expedition in his power. He wrote, also, to General George Clinton, to reinforce Putnam with as many of the New York militia as could be collected. Clinton, be it observed, had just been installed governor of the State of New York—the first person elevated to that office under the constitution. He still continued in actual command of the militia of the State, and it was with great satisfaction that Washington subsequently learnt he had determined to resume the command of Fort Montgomery in the Highlands: "There cannot be a more proper man," writes he, "on every account."

Washington, moreover, requested Putnam to send an express to Governor Trumbull, urging assistance from the militia of his State without a moment's loss of time. "Connecticut cannot be in more danger through any channel than this, and every motive of its own interest and the general good demands its utmost endeavors to give you effectual assistance. Governor Trumbull will, I trust, be sensible of this."

And here we take occasion to observe, that there could be no surer reliance for aid in time

of danger than the patriotism of Governor Trumbull; nor were there men more ready to obey a sudden appeal to arms than the yeomanry of Connecticut; however much their hearts might subsequently yearn toward the farms and firesides they had so promptly abandoned. No portion of the Union was more severely tasked, throughout the Revolution, for military services; and Washington avowed, when the great struggle was over, that, "if all the States had done their duty as well as the little State of Connecticut, the war would have been ended long ago." *

* Communicated by Professor B. Silliman.

Chapter XV.

Gates on the Alert for a Command—Schuyler Undermined in Congress—Put on his Guard—Courts a Scrutiny, but not before an Expected Engagement—Summoned with St. Clair to Headquarters—Gates Appointed to the Northern Department—Washington's Speculations on the Successes of Burgoyne—Ill-Judged Meddlings of Congress with the Commissariat—Colonel Trumbull Resigns in Consequence.

WE have cited in a preceding page a letter from Washington to Gates at Philadelphia, requiring his vigilant attention to the movements of the enemy's fleet; that ambitious officer, however, was engrossed at the time by matters more important to his individual interests. The command of the Northern department seemed again within his reach. The evacuation of Ticonderoga had been imputed by many either to cowardice or treachery on the part of General St. Clair, and the enemies of Schuyler had, for

some time past, been endeavoring to involve him in the disgrace of the transaction. It is true he was absent from the fortress at the time, zealously engaged, as we have shown, in procuring and forwarding reinforcements and supplies; but it was alleged that the fort had been evacuated by his order, and that, while there, he had made such dispositions as plainly indicated an intention to deliver it to the enemy. In the eagerness to excite popular feeling against him, old slanders were revived, and the failure of the invasion of Canada, and all the subsequent disasters in that quarter, were again laid to his charge as commanding general of the Northern department. "In short," writes Schuyler in one of his letters, "every art is made use of to destroy that confidence which it is so essential the army should have in its general officers, and this too by people pretending to be friends to the country." *

These charges, which for some time existed merely in popular clamor, had recently been taken up in Congress, and a strong demonstration had been made against him by some of the New England delegates. "Your enemies in this quarter," writes his friend, the Hon. William Duer (July 29th), "are leaving no means unessayed to blast your character, and

* Schuyler to Governor Trumbull. Letter Book.

to impute to your appointment in that department a loss which, rightly investigated, can be imputed to very different causes.

"Be not surprised if you should be desired to attend Congress, to give an account of the loss of Ticonderoga. With respect to the result of the inquiry I am under no apprehensions. Like gold tried in the fire, I trust that you, my dear friend, will be found more pure and bright than ever. . . . From the nature of your department, and other unavoidable causes, you have not had an opportunity, during the course of this war, of evincing that spirit which *I* and your more intimate friends know you to possess: of this circumstance prejudice takes a cruel advantage, and malice lends an easy ear to her dictates. A hint on this subject is sufficient. You will not, I am sure, see this place till your conduct gives the lie to this insinuation, as it has done before to every other which your enemies have so industriously circulated." *

Schuyler, in reply, expressed the most ardent wish that Congress would order him to attend and give an account of his conduct. He wished his friends to push for the closest scrutiny, confident that it would redound to his honor. "I would not, however, wish the

* Schuyler's Papers.

scrutiny to take place immediately," adds he, "as we shall probably soon have an engagement, if we are so reinforced with militia as to give us a probable chance of success. . . . Be assured, my dear friend, if a general engagement takes place, whatever may be the event, you will not have occasion to blush for your friend." *

It seemed to be the object of Mr. Schuyler's enemies to forestall his having such a chance of distinguishing himself. The business was pushed in Congress more urgently than even Mr. Duer had anticipated. Beside the allegations against him in regard to Ticonderoga, his unpopularity in the Eastern States was urged as a sufficient reason for discontinuing him in his present command, as the troops from that quarter were unwilling to serve under him. This had a great effect in the present time of peril, with several of the delegates from the East, who discredited the other charges against him. The consequence was, that after long and ardent debates, in which some of the most eminent delegates from New York, who intimately knew his worth, stood up in his favor, it was resolved (August 1st) that both General Schuyler and General St. Clair should be summoned to headquarters to account for the mis-

* Schuyler's Letter Book.

fortunes in the North, and that Washington should be directed to order such general officer as he should think proper to succeed General Schuyler in the command of the Northern department.

The very next day a letter was addressed to Washington by several of the leading Eastern members, men of unquestionable good faith, such as Samuel and John Adams, urging the appointment of Gates. "No man, in our opinion," said they, "will be more likely to restore harmony, order, and discipline, and retrieve our affairs in that quarter. He has, on experience, acquired the confidence and stands high in the esteem of the Eastern troops." Washington excused himself from making any nomination, alleging that the Northern department had, in a great measure, been considered a separate one; that, moreover, the situation of the department was delicate, and might involve interesting and delicate consequences. The nomination, therefore, was made by Congress; the Eastern influence prevailed, and Gates received the appointment, so long the object of his aspirations, if not intrigues.

Washington deeply regretted the removal of a noble-hearted man, with whom he had acted so harmoniously, whose exertions had been so energetic and unwearied, and who was so pe-

culiarly fitted for the varied duties of the department. He consoled himself, however, with the thought that the excuse of want of confidence in the general officers, hitherto alleged by the Eastern States for withholding reinforcements, would be obviated by the presence of this man of their choice.

With the prevalent wisdom of his pen, he endeavored to allay the distrusts and apprehensions awakened by the misfortune at Ticonderoga, which he considered the worst consequence of that event. "If the matter were coolly and dispassionately considered," writes he to the Council of Safety of the State of New York, "there would be nothing found so formidable in General Burgoyne and the force under him, with all his successes, to countenance the least degree of despondency; and experience would show, that even the moderate exertions of the States more immediately interested, would be sufficient to check his career, and, perhaps, convert the advantages he has gained to his ruin. . . . If I do not give so effectual aid as I could wish to the Northern army, it is not from want of inclination, nor from being too little impressed with the importance of doing it; but because the state of affairs in this quarter will not possibly admit of it. It would be the height of

impolicy to weaken ourselves too much here, in order to increase our strength there; and it must certainly be considered more difficult, as well as of greater moment, to control the main army of the enemy, than an inferior, and, I may say, dependent one; for it is pretty obvious that if General Howe can be kept at bay, and prevented from effecting his purposes, the successes of General Burgoyne, whatever they may be, must be partial and temporary."

The sagacity and foresight of this policy will be manifested by after events.

On the same day on which the above letter was written, he officially announced to Gates his appointment, and desired him to proceed immediately to the place of his destination: wishing him success, and that he "might speedily be able to restore the face of affairs in that quarter."

About this time took effect a measure of Congress, making a complete change in the commissariat. This important and complicated department had hitherto been under the management of one commissary-general, Colonel Joseph Trumbull of Connecticut. By the new arrangement there were to be two commissary-generals, one of purchases, the other of issues; each to be appointed by Congress. They were to have several deputy commissaries under

them, but accountable to Congress, and to be appointed and removed by that body. These, and many subordinate arrangements, had been adopted in opposition to the opinion of Washington, and, most unfortunately, were brought into operation in the midst of this perplexed and critical campaign.

Their first effect was to cause the resignation of Colonel Trumbull, who had been nominated commissary of purchases; and the entrance into office of a number of inexperienced men. The ultimate effect was to paralyze the organization of this vital department; to cause delay and confusion in furnishing and forwarding supplies; and to retard and embarrass the operations of the different armies throughout the year. Washington had many dangers and difficulties to harass and perplex him throughout this complicated campaign, and not among the least may be classed the "stumblings of Congress."

NOTE.

An author, eminent for his historical researches, expresses himself at a loss to explain the prejudice existing against General Schuyler among the people of the New England States. "There was not an individual connected with the Revolution," observes he, "concerning whom there is more abundant evidence

of his patriotism and unwearied services in the cause of his country."

Wilkinson, at that time a devoted follower of Gates, and likely to know the influences that operated against his rival, traces this prejudice up to times prior to the Revolution, when Schuyler acted as commissioner on the part of New York in settling the partition line between that colony and Massachusetts Bay. This gave rise to the feuds and controversies concerning the Hampshire Grants, in which, according to Wilkinson, the parties were distinguished by the designations of Yankee and Yorker. The zealous exertions of Schuyler on behalf of New York, gained him the ill will of the Hampshire grantees, and of eastern men of the first rank with whom he came in collision. This feeling survived the controversy, and existed among the militia from those parts. On the other hand, Wilkinson observes, "It was General Gates's policy to favor the views of the inhabitants of the Hampshire Grants, which made him popular with these people."

Somewhat of the prejudice against Schuyler Wilkinson ascribes to social habits and manners, "those of New England at the time being democratic and puritanical, whilst in New York they were courtly and aristocratical." Schuyler was a man of the world, and of society, cultivated, and well bred; he was an élève too of Major-General Bradstreet in the seven years' war; and had imbibed notions of military carriage and decorum in an aristocratic school; all this rendered him impatient at times of the deficiencies in these respects among the raw militia officers, and made the latter consider him haughty and reserved.

Chapter XVI.

Washington's Perplexities about the British Fleet—Putnam and Governor Clinton Put on the Alert in the Highlands. Morgan and his Riflemen Sent to the North—Washington at Philadelphia—His First Interview with Lafayette—Intelligence about the Fleet—Explanations of its Movements—Review of the Army—Lafayette Mistakes the Nature of his Commission—His Alliance with Washington—March of the Army through Philadelphia—Encampment at Wilmington.

FOR several days Washington remained at Germantown in painful uncertainty about the British fleet; whether gone to the south or to the east. The intense heat of the weather made him unwilling again to move his army, already excessively harassed by marchings and counter-marchings. Concluding, at length, that the fleet had actually gone to the east, he was once more on the way to recross the Delaware, when an express overtook him on the 10th of August, with tid-

ings that three days before it had been seen off Sinepuxent Inlet, about sixteen leagues south of the Capes of Delaware.

Again he came to a halt, and waited for further intelligence. Danger suggested itself from a different quarter. Might it not be Howe's plan, by thus appearing with his ships at different places, to lure the army after him, and thereby leave the country open for Sir Henry Clinton with the troops at New York to form a junction with Burgoyne? With this idea Washington wrote forthwith to the veteran Putnam to be on the alert; collect all the force he could to strengthen his post at Peekskill, and send down spies to ascertain whether Sir Henry Clinton was actually at New York, and what troops he had there. "If he has the number of men with him that is reported," observes Washington, "it is probably with the intention to attack you from below, while Burgoyne comes down upon you from above."

The old general, whose boast it was that he never slept but with one eye, was already on the alert. A circumstance had given him proof positive that Sir Henry was in New York, and had roused his military ire. A spy, sent by that commander, had been detected furtively collecting information of the force and condition of the post at Peekskill, and had under-

gone a military trial. A vessel of war came up the Hudson in all haste, and landed a flag of truce at Verplanck's Point, by which a message was transmitted to Putnam from Sir Henry Clinton, claiming Edmund Palmer as a lieutenant in the British service.

The reply of the old general was brief but emphatic.

"HEADQUARTERS, *7th Aug.*, 1777.

"Edmund Palmer, an officer in the enemy's service, was taken as a spy lurking within our lines; he has been tried as a spy, condemned as a spy, and shall be executed as a spy: and the flag is ordered to depart immediately.

"ISRAEL PUTNAM.

"P. S.—He has, accordingly, been executed."

Governor Clinton, the other guardian of the Highlands, and actually at his post at Fort Montgomery, was equally on the alert. He had faithfully followed Washington's directions, in ordering out militia from different counties to reinforce his own garrison and the army under Schuyler. "I never knew the militia come out with greater alacrity," writes he: "but, as many of them have yet a great part of their harvests in the field, I fear it will be difficult to detain them long, unless the

enemy will make some movements that indicate a design of coming this way suddenly, and so obvious as to be believed by the militia."

At the same time, the worthy governor expressed his surprise that the Northern army had not been reinforced from the eastward. "The want of confidence in the general officers to the northward," adds he, "is the specious reason. To me it appears a very weak one. Common gratitude to a sister State, as well as duty to the continent at large, conspire in calling on our eastern neighbors to step forth on this occasion."

One measure more was taken by Washington, during this interval, in aid of the northern department. The Indians who accompanied Burgoyne were objects of great dread to the American troops, especially the militia. As a counterpoise to them, he now sent up Colonel Morgan with five hundred riflemen to fight them in their own way. "They are all chosen men," said he "selected from the army at large, and well acquainted with the use of rifles and with that mode of fighting. I expect the most eminent services from them, and I shall be mistaken if their presence does not go far towards producing a general desertion among the savages." It was, indeed, an arm

of strength, which he could but ill spare from his own army.

Putnam was directed to have sloops ready to transport them up the Hudson, and Gates was informed of their being on the way, and about what time he might expect them, as well as two regiments from Peekskill, under Colonels Van Courtlandt and Livingston.

"With these reinforcements, besides the militia under General Lincoln," writes Washington to Gates, "I am in hopes you will find yourself at least equal to stop the progress of Mr. Burgoyne, and, by cutting off his supplies of provisions, to render his situation very ineligible." Washington was thus, in a manner, carrying on two games at once, with Howe on the seaboard and with Burgoyne on the upper waters of the Hudson, and endeavoring by skilful movements to give check to both. It was an arduous and complicated task, especially with his scanty and fluctuating means, and the wide extent of country and great distances over which he had to move his men.

His measures to throw a force in the rear of Burgoyne were now in a fair way of being carried into effect. Lincoln was at Bennington. Stark had joined him with a body of New Hampshire militia, and a corps of Massachusetts militia was arriving. "Such a force in

his rear," observed Washington, "will oblige Burgoyne to leave such strong posts behind as must make his main body very weak, and extremely capable of being repulsed by the force we have in front."

During his encampment in the neighborhood of Philadelphia, Washington was repeatedly at that city, making himself acquainted with the military capabilities of the place and its surrounding country, and directing the construction of fortifications on the river. In one of these visits he became acquainted with the young Marquis de Lafayette, who had recently arrived from France, in company with a number of French, Polish, and German officers, among whom was the Baron de Kalb. The marquis was not quite twenty years of age, yet had already been married nearly three years to a lady of rank and fortune. Full of the romance of liberty, he had torn himself from his youthful bride, turned his back upon the gayeties and splendors of a court, and in defiance of impediments and difficulties multiplied in his path, had made his way to America to join its hazardous fortunes.

He sent in his letters of recommendation to Mr. Lovell, Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs; and applied the next day at the door of Congress to know his success. Mr.

Lovell came forth, and gave him but little encouragement; Congress, in fact, was embarrassed by the number of foreign applications, many without merit. Lafayette immediately sent in the following note: "After my sacrifices, I have the right to ask two favors; one is to serve at my own expense; the other, to commence by serving as a volunteer." *

This simple appeal had its effect: it called attention to his peculiar case, and Congress resolved on the 31st of July, that in consideration of his zeal, his illustrious family and connections, he should have the rank of major-general in the army of the United States.

It was at a public dinner, where a number of members of Congress were present, that Lafayette first saw Washington. He immediately knew him, he said, from the officers who surrounded him, by his commanding air and person. When the party was breaking up, Washington took him aside, complimented him in a gracious manner on his disinterested zeal and the generosity of his conduct, and invited him to make headquarters his home. "I cannot promise you the luxuries of a court," said he, "but as you have become an American soldier, you will, doubtless, accommodate yourself to the fare of an American army."

* *Memoirs du Gen. Lafayette*, tom. i., p. 19.

Many days had now elapsed without further tidings of the fleet. What had become of it? Had Howe gone against Charleston? If so, the distance was too great to think of following him. Before the army, debilitated and wasted by a long march, under a summer sun, in an unhealthy climate, could reach there, he might accomplish every purpose he had in view, and re-embark his troops to turn his arms against Philadelphia, or any other point, without the army being at hand to oppose him.

What, under these uncertainties, was to be done? Remain inactive, in the remote probability of Howe's returning this way; or proceed to the Hudson with a view either to oppose Burgoyne, or make an attempt upon New York? A successful stroke with respect to either, might make up for any losses sustained in the South. The latter was unanimously determined in a council of war, in which the Marquis Lafayette took part. As it was, however, a movement that might involve the most important consequences, Washington sent his aide-de-camp, Colonel Alexander Hamilton, with a letter to the President of Congress, requesting the opinion of that body. Congress approved the decision of the council, and the army was about to be put in march, when all these tormenting uncertainties were

brought to an end by intelligence that the fleet had actually entered the Chesapeake, and anchored at Swan Point, at least two hundred miles within the capes. "By General Howe's coming so far up the Chesapeake," writes Washington, "he must mean to reach Philadelphia by that route, though to be sure it is a strange one."

The mystery of these various appearances and vanishings, which had caused so much wonder and perplexity, is easily explained. Shortly before putting to sea with the ships of war, Howe had sent a number of transports, and a ship cut down as a floating battery, up the Hudson, which had induced Washington to despatch troops to the Highlands. After putting to sea, the fleet was a week in reaching the Capes of Delaware. When there, the commanders were deterred from entering the river by reports of measures taken to obstruct its navigation. It was then determined to make for Chesapeake Bay, and approach, in that way, as near as possible to Philadelphia. Contrary winds, however, kept them for a long time from getting into the bay.

Lafayette, in his memoirs, describes a review of Washington's army which he witnessed about this time. "Eleven thousand men, but tolerably armed, and still worse clad, pre-

sented," he said, "a singular spectacle; in this parti-colored and often naked state, the best dresses were hunting shirts of brown linen. Their tactics were equally irregular. They were arranged without regard to size, excepting that the smallest men were the front rank; with all this, there were good-looking soldiers conducted by zealous officers."

"We ought to feel embarrassed," said Washington to him, "in presenting ourselves before an officer just from the French army."

"It is to learn, and not to instruct, that I come here," was Lafayette's apt and modest reply; and it gained him immediate popularity.

The marquis, however, had misconceived the nature of his appointment; his commission was merely honorary, but he had supposed it given with a view to the command of a division of the army. This misconception on his part caused Washington some embarrassment. The marquis, with his characteristic vivacity and ardor, was eager for immediate employ. He admitted that he was young and inexperienced, but always accompanied the admission with the assurance that, so soon as Washington should think him fit for the command of a division, he would be ready to enter upon the duties of it, and, in the meantime, offered his

services for a smaller command. "What the designs of Congress respecting this gentleman are, and what line of conduct I am to pursue to comply with their design and his expectations," writes Washington, "I know not, and beg to be instructed."

"The numberless applications for employment by foreigners under their respective appointments," continues he, "add no small embarrassment to a command, which, without it, is abundantly perplexed by the different tempers I have to do with, and the different modes which the respective States have pursued in nominating and arranging their officers; *the combination of all is but too just a representation of a great chaos, from whence we are endeavoring, how successfully time only can show, to draw some regularity and order.*"* How truly is here depicted one of the great difficulties of his command, continually tasking his equity and equanimity. In the present instance it was intimated to Washington, that he was not bound by the tenor of Lafayette's commission to give him a command; but was at liberty to follow his own judgment in the matter. This still left him in a delicate situation, with respect to the marquis, whose prepossessing manners and self-sacrificing zeal

* Washington to Benjamin Harrison. Sparks, v., 35.

inspired regard ; but whose extreme youth and inexperience necessitated caution. Lafayette, however, from the first attached himself to Washington with an affectionate reverence, the sincerity of which could not be mistaken, and soon won his way into a heart, which, with all its apparent coldness, was naturally confiding, and required sympathy and friendship ; and it is a picture well worthy to be hung up in history,—this cordial and enduring alliance of the calm, dignified, sedate Washington, mature in years and wisdom, and the young, buoyant, enthusiastic Lafayette.

The several divisions of the army had been summoned to the immediate neighborhood of Philadelphia, and the militia of Pennsylvania, Delaware, and the northern parts of Virginia were called out. Many of the militia, with Colonel Proctor's corps of artillery, had been ordered to rendezvous at Chester on the Delaware, about twelve miles below Philadelphia ; and, by Washington's orders, General Wayne left his brigade under the next in command, and repaired to Chester, to arrange the troops assembling there.

As there had been much disaffection to the cause evinced in Philadelphia, Washington, in order to encourage its friends and dishearten its enemies, marched with the whole army

through the city, down Front and up Chestnut Street. Great pains were taken to make the display as imposing as possible. All were charged to keep to their ranks, carry their arms well, and step in time to the music of the drums and fifes, collected in the centre of each brigade. "Though indifferently dressed," says a spectator, "they held well-burnished arms, and carried them like soldiers, and looked, in short, as if they might have faced an equal number with a reasonable prospect of success." To give them something of a uniform appearance, they had sprigs of green in their hats.

Washington rode at the head of the troops attended by his numerous staff, with the Marquis Lafayette by his side. The long column of the army, broken into divisions and brigades, the pioneers with their axes, the squadrons of horse, the extended trains of artillery, the tramp of steed, the bray of trumpet, and the spirit-stirring sound of drum and fife, all had an imposing effect on a peaceful city unused to the sight of marshalled armies. The disaffected, who had been taught to believe the American forces much less than they were in reality, were astonished as they gazed on the lengthening procession of a host, which, to their unpractised eyes, appeared innumerable · while

the whigs, gaining fresh hope and animation from the sight, cheered the patriot squadrons as they passed.

Having marched through Philadelphia, the army continued on to Wilmington, at the confluence of Christiana Creek and the Brandywine, where Washington set up his headquarters, his troops being encamped on the neighboring heights.

We will now revert to the other object of Washington's care and solicitude, the invading army of Burgoyne in the north; and will see how far his precautionary measures were effective.

Chapter XVII.

Burgoyne at Skenesborough—Prepares to Move towards the Hudson—Major Skene the Royalist—Slow March to Fort Anne—Schuyler at Fort Miller—Painted Warriors—Langlade—St. Luc—Honor of the Tomahawk—Tragical History of Miss McCrea—Its Results—Burgoyne Advances to Fort Edward—Schuyler at Stillwater—Joined by Lincoln—Burgoyne Deserted by his Indian Allies.

IN a preceding chapter we left Burgoyne, early in July, at Skenesborough, of which he had just gained possession. He remained there nearly three weeks, awaiting the arrival of the residue of his troops, with tents, baggage and provisions, and preparing for his grand move toward the Hudson River. Many royalists flocked to his standard. One of the most important was Major Skene, from whom the place was named, being its founder, and the owner of much land in its neighborhood. He had served in the French War, but retired on half pay; bought "sol-

diers' grants" of land lying within this township, at a trifling price, had their titles secured by a royal patent, and thus made a fortune. Burgoyne considered him a valuable adjunct and counsellor, and frequently took advice from him in his campaign through this part of the country.

The progress of the army towards the Hudson was slow and difficult, in consequence of the impediments which Schuyler had multiplied in his way during his long halt at Skenesborough. Bridges broken down had to be rebuilt; great trees to be removed which had been felled across the roads and into Wood Creek, which stream was completely choked. It was not until the latter part of July that Burgoyne reached Fort Anne. At his approach, General Schuyler retired from Fort Edward and took post at Fort Miller, a few miles lower down the Hudson.

The Indian allies who had hitherto accompanied the British army had been more troublesome than useful. Neither Burgoyne nor his officers understood their language, but were obliged to communicate with them through Canadian interpreters; too often designing knaves, who played false to both parties. The Indians, too, were of the tribes of Lower Canada, corrupted and debased by intercourse

with white men. It had been found difficult to draw them from the plunder of Ticonderoga, or to restrain their murderous propensities.

A party had recently arrived of a different stamp. Braves of the Ottawa and other tribes from the upper country; painted and decorated with savage magnificence, and bearing trophies of former triumphs. They were, in fact, according to Burgoyne, the very Indians who had aided the French in the defeat of Braddock, and were under the conduct of two French leaders; one, named Langlade, had command of them on that very occasion; the other, named St. Luc, is described by Burgoyne as a Canadian gentleman of honor and abilities, and one of the best partisans of the French in the war of 1756.

Burgoyne trusted to his newly arrived Indians to give a check to the operations of Schuyler, knowing the terror they inspired throughout the country. He thought also to employ them in a wild foray to the Connecticut River, to force a supply of provisions, intercept reinforcements to the American army, and confirm the jealousy which he had, in many ways, endeavored to excite in the New England provinces. He was naturally a humane man, and disliked Indian allies, but these had hitherto served in company with civilized

troops, and he trusted to the influence possessed over them by St. Luc and Langlade, to keep them within the usages of war. A circumstance occurred, however, which showed how little the "wild honor" of these warriors of the tomahawk was to be depended upon.

In General Fraser's division was a young officer, Lieutenant David Jones, an American loyalist. His family had their home in the vicinity of Fort Edward before the Revolution. A mutual attachment had taken place between the youth and a beautiful girl, Jane McCrea. She was the daughter of a Scotch Presbyterian clergyman of the Jerseys, some time deceased, and resided with her brother on the banks of the Hudson, a few miles below Fort Edward. The lovers were engaged to be married, when the breaking out of the war severed families and disturbed all the relations of life. The Joneses were royalists; the brother of Miss McCrea was a stanch whig. The former removed to Canada, where David Jones was among the most respectable of those who joined the royal standard, and received a lieutenant's commission.

The attachment between the lovers continued, and it is probable that a correspondence was kept up between them. Lieutenant Jones

was now in Fraser's camp, in his old neighborhood. Miss McCrea was on a visit to a widow lady, Mrs. O'Niel, residing at Fort Edward. The approach of Burgoyne's army had spread an alarm through the country; the inhabitants were flying from their homes. The brother of Miss McCrea determined to remove to Albany, and sent for his sister to return home and make ready to accompany him. She hesitated to obey. He sent a more urgent message, representing the danger of lingering near the fort, which must inevitably fall into the hands of the enemy. Still she lingered. The lady with whom she was a guest was a royalist, a friend of General Fraser; her roof would be respected. Even should Fort Edward be captured, what had Jane to fear? Her lover was in the British camp; the capture of the fort would reunite them.

Her brother's messages now became peremptory. She prepared, reluctantly, to obey, and was to embark in a large bateau which was to convey several families down the river. The very morning when the embarkation was to take place, the neighborhood was a scene of terror. A marauding party of Indians, sent out by Burgoyne to annoy General Schuyler, were harassing the country. Several of them burst into the house of Mrs. O'Niel, sacked

and plundered it, and carried off her and Miss McCrea prisoners. In her fright the latter promised the savages a large reward, if they would spare her life and take her in safety to the British camp. It was a fatal promise. Halting at a spring, a quarrel arose among the savages, inflamed most probably with drink, as to whose prize she was, and who was entitled to the reward. The dispute became furious, and one, in a paroxysm of rage, killed her on the spot. He completed the savage act by bearing off her scalp as a trophy.

General Burgoyne was struck with horror when he heard of this bloody deed. What at first heightened the atrocity was a report that the Indians had been sent by Lieutenant Jones to bring Miss McCrea to the camp. This he positively denied, and his denial was believed. Burgoyne summoned a council of the Indian chiefs, in which he insisted that the murderer of Miss McCrea should be given up to receive the reward of his crime. The demand produced a violent agitation. The culprit was a great warrior, a chief, and the "wild honor" of his brother sachems was roused in his behalf. St. Luc took Burgoyne aside, and entreated him not to push the matter to extremities; assuring him that, from what was passing among the chiefs, he was sure they

and their warriors would all abandon the army, should the delinquent be executed. The British officers also interfered, representing the danger that might accrue should the Indians return through Canada, with their savage resentments awakened, or, what was worse, should they go over to the Americans.

Burgoyne was thus reluctantly brought to spare the offender, but thenceforth made it a rule that no party of Indians should be permitted to go forth on a foray unless under the conduct of a British officer, or some other competent person, who should be responsible for their behavior.

The mischief to the British cause, however, had been effected. The murder of Miss McCrea resounded throughout the land, counteracting all the benefit anticipated from the terror of Indian hostilities. Those people of the frontiers, who had hitherto remained quiet, now flew to arms to defend their families and firesides. In their exasperation they looked beyond the savages to their employers. They abhorred an army, which, professing to be civilized, could league itself with such barbarians; and they execrated a government which, pretending to reclaim them as subjects, could let loose such fiends to desolate their homes.

The blood of this unfortunate girl, therefore,

was not shed in vain. Armies sprang up from it. Her name passed as a note of alarm, along the banks of the Hudson; it was a rallying word among the Green Mountains of Vermont, and brought down all their hardy yeomanry.*

As Burgoyne advanced to Fort Edward, Schuyler fell still farther back, and took post at Saratoga, or rather Stillwater, about thirty miles from Albany. He had been joined by Major-General Lincoln, who, according to Washington's directions, had hastened to his assistance. In pursuance of Washington's

* The sad story of Miss McCrea, like many other incidents of the Revolution, has been related in such a variety of ways, and so wrought up by tradition, that it is difficult now to get at the simple truth. Some of the above circumstances were derived from a niece of Miss McCrea, whom the author met upwards of fifty years since, at her residence on the banks of the St. Lawrence. A stone, with her name cut on it, still marks the grave of Miss McCrea near the ruins of Fort Edward; and a tree is pointed out near which she was murdered. Lieutenant Jones is said to have been completely broken in spirit by the shock of her death. Procuring her scalp, with its long silken tresses, he brooded over it in anguish, and preserved it as a sad, but precious relic. Disgusted with the service, he threw up his commission, and retired to Canada; never marrying, but living to be an old man, taciturn and melancholy, and haunted by painful recollections.

plans, Lincoln proceeded to Manchester in Vermont, to take command of the militia forces collecting at that point. His presence inspired new confidence in the country people, who were abandoning their homes, leaving their crops ungathered, and taking refuge with their families in the lower towns. He found about five hundred militia assembled at Manchester, under Colonel Seth Warner; others were coming on from New Hampshire and Massachusetts, to protect their uncovered frontier. His letters, dated the 4th of August, expressed the expectation of being, in a few days, at the head of at least two thousand men. With these, according to Washington's plan, he was to hang on the flank and rear of Burgoyne's army, cramp its movements, and watch for an opportunity to strike a blow.

Burgoyne was now at Fort Edward. "The enthusiasm of the army, as well as of the general, upon their arrival on the Hudson River, which had been so long the object of their hopes and wishes, may be better conceived than described," says a British writer of the day. The enthusiasm of the general was soon checked, however, by symptoms of ill-humor among his Indian allies. They resented his conduct in regard to the affair of Miss McCrea, and were impatient under the restraint to which

they were subjected. He suspected the Canadian interpreters of fomenting this discontent, they being accustomed to profit by the rapine of the Indians. At the earnest request of St. Luc, in whom he still had confidence, he called a council of the chiefs; when, to his astonishment, the tribe for whom that gentleman acted as interpreter, declared their intention of returning home, and demanded his concurrence and assistance.

Burgoyne was greatly embarrassed. Should he acquiesce, it would be to relinquish the aid of a force obtained at an immense expense, esteemed in England of great importance, and which really was serviceable in furnishing scouts and outposts; yet he saw that a cordial reconciliation with them could only be effected by revoking his prohibitions, and indulging their propensities to blood and rapine.

To his credit be it recorded, he adhered to what was right, and rejected what might be deemed expedient. He refused their proposition, and persisted in the restraints he had imposed upon them, but appealed to the wild honor, of which he yet considered them capable, by urging the ties of faith, of generosity, of everything that has an influence with civilized man. His speech appeared to have a good effect. Some of the remote tribes made

zealous professions of loyalty and adhesion. Others, of Lower Canada, only asked furloughs for parties to return home and gather in their harvests. These were readily granted, and perfect harmony seemed restored. The next day, however, the chivalry of the wilderness deserted by scores, laden with such spoil as they had collected in their maraudings. These desertions continued from day to day, until there remained in the camp scarce a vestige of the savage warriors that had joined the army at Skenesborough.

Chapter XVIII.

Difficulties of Burgoyne—Plans an Expedition to Bennington—St. Leger before Fort Stanwix—General Herkimer at Oriskany—High Words with his Officers—A Dogged March—An Ambuscade—Battle of Oriskany—Johnson's Greens—Death of Herkimer—Spirited Sortie of Colonel Willett—Sir John Johnson Driven to the River—Flight of the Indians—Sacking of Sir John's Camp—Colonel Gansevoort Maintains his Post—Colonel Willett Sent in Quest of Aid—Arrives at Schuyler's Camp.

NEW difficulties beset Burgoyne at Fort Edward. The horses which had been contracted for in Canada, for draft, burden, and saddle, arrived slowly and scantily; having to come a long distance through the wilderness. Artillery and munitions, too, of all kinds, had to be brought from Ticonderoga by the way of Lake George. These, with a vast number of boats for freight, or to form bridges, it was necessary to transport over the carrying-places between the

lakes; and by land from Fort George to Fort Edward. Unfortunately, the army had not the requisite supply of horses and oxen. So far from being able to bring forward provisions for a march, it was with difficulty enough could be furnished to feed the army from day to day.

While thus situated, Burgoyne received intelligence that the part of his army which he had detached from Canada under Colonel St. Leger, to proceed by Lake Ontario and Oswego and make a diversion on the Mohawk, had penetrated to that river, and were actually investing Fort Stanwix, the stronghold of that part of the country.

To carry out the original plan of his campaign, it now behooved him to make a rapid move down the Hudson, so as to be at hand to co-operate with St. Leger on his approach to Albany. But how was he to do this, deficient as he was in horses and vehicles for transportation? In this dilemma Colonel (late major) Skene, the royalist of Skenesborough, to whom, from his knowledge of all this region, he had of late resorted for counsel, informed him that at Bennington, about twenty-four miles east of the Hudson, the Americans had a great depot of horses, carriages, and supplies of all kinds, intended for their Northern army.

This place, he added, might easily be surprised, being guarded by only a small militia force.

An expedition was immediately set on foot, not only to surprise this place, but to scour the country from Rockingham to Otter Creek; go down the Connecticut as far as Brattleborough, and return by the great road to Albany, there to meet Burgoyne. They were to make prisoners of all officers, civil and military, whom they might meet, acting under Congress; to tax the towns where they halted with everything they stood in need of, and bring off all horses fit for the dragoons, or for battalion service, with as many saddles and bridles as could be found.

They were everywhere to give out that this was the vanguard of the British army, which would soon follow on its way to Boston, and would soon be joined by the army from Rhode Island. Before relating the events of this expedition, we will turn to notice those of the detachment under St. Leger, with which it was intended to co-operate, and which was investing Fort Schuyler.

This Fort, built in 1756, on the site of an old French fortification, and formerly called Fort Stanwix, from a British general of that name, was situated on the right bank of the

Mohawk River, at the head of its navigation, and commanding the carrying-place between it and Wood Creek, whence the boats passed to the Oneida Lake, the Oswego River, and Lake Ontario. It was thus a key to the intercourse between Upper Canada and the valley of the Mohawk. The fort was square, with four bastions, and was originally a place of strength; having bomb-proof magazines, a deep moat and draw-bridge, a sally-port, and covered way. In the long interval of peace subsequent to the French war, it had fallen to decay. Recently it had been repaired by order of General Schuyler, and had received his name. It was garrisoned by seven hundred and fifty continental troops from New York and Massachusetts, and was under the command of Colonel Gansevoort of the New York line, a stout-hearted officer of Dutch descent, who had served under General Montgomery in Canada.

It was a motley force which appeared before it; British, Hessian, Royalist, Canadian, and Indian, about seventeen hundred in all. Among them were St. Leger's rangers and Sir John Johnson's royalist corps, called his greens. Many of the latter had followed Sir John into Canada from the valley of the Mohawk, and were now returned to bring the horrors of war among their former neighbors. The Indians,

their worthy allies, were led by the famous Brant.

On the 3d of August, St. Leger sent in a flag with a summons to surrender; accompanied by a proclamation in style and spirit similiar to that recently issued by Burgoyne, and intended to operate on the garrison. Both his summons and his proclamation were disregarded. He now set his troops to work to fortify his camp and clear obstructions from Wood Creek and the roads, for the transportation of artillery and provisions, and sent out scouting parties of Indians in all directions, to cut off all communication of the garrison with the surrounding country. A few shells were thrown into the fort. The chief annoyance of the garrison was from the Indians firing with their rifles from behind trees on those busied in repairing the parapets. At night they seemed completely to surround the fort, filling the woods with their yells and howlings.

On the 6th of August, three men made their way into the fort through a swamp, which the enemy had deemed impassable. They brought the cheering intelligence that General Herkimer, the veteran commander of the militia of Tryon County, was at Oriskany, about eight miles distant, with upwards of eight hundred men. The people of that county were many

of them of German origin; some of them Germans by birth. Herkimer was among the former; a large and powerful man, about sixty-five years of age. He requested Colonel Gansevoort, through his three messengers, to fire three signal-guns on receiving word of his vicinage; upon hearing which, he would endeavor to force his way to the fort, depending upon the co-operation of the garrison.

The messengers had been despatched by Herkimer on the evening of the 5th, and he had calculated that they would reach the fort at a very early hour in the morning. Through some delay, they did not reach it until between ten and eleven o'clock. Gansevoort instantly complied with the message. Three signal-guns were fired, and Colonel Willett, of the New York Continentals, with two hundred and fifty men and an iron three-pounder, was detached to make a diversion, by attacking that part of the enemy's camp occupied by Johnson and his royalists.

The delay of the messengers in the night, however, disconcerted the plan of Herkimer. He marshalled his troops by daybreak and waited for the signal-guns. Hour after hour elapsed, but no gun was heard. His officers became impatient of delay, and urged an immediate march. Herkimer represented that they

were too weak to force their way to the fort without reinforcements, or without being sure of co-operation from the garrison, and was still for awaiting the preconcerted signals. High words ensued between him and two of his officers. He had a brother and other relatives among the enemy, and hence there were some doubts of his fidelity, though they subsequently proved to be unmerited. Colonels Cox and Paris were particularly urgent for an advance, and suspicious of the motives for holding back. Paris was a prominent man in Tryon County, and member of the Committee of Safety, and in compliance with the wishes of that committee, accompanied Herkimer as his volunteer aide. Losing his temper in the dispute, he accused the latter of being either a tory or a coward. "No," replied the brave old man, "I feel toward you all as a father, and will not lead you into a scrape from which I cannot extricate you." His discretion, however, was overpowered by repeated taunts, and he at length, about nine o'clock, gave the word to march; intimating, however, that those who were the most eager to advance, would be the first to run away.

The march was rather dogged and irregular. There was ill-humor between the general and his officers. Colonels Paris and Cox advised

him to throw out a reconnoitering party in the advance, but he disregarded their advice, and perhaps in very opposition to it, neglected so necessary a precaution. About ten o'clock they came to a place where the road was carried on a causeway of logs across a deep marshy ravine, between high level banks. The main division descended into the ravine, followed by the baggage-wagons. They had scarcely crossed it, when enemies suddenly sprang up in front and on either side, with deadly volleys of musketry, and deafening yells and war-whoops. In fact, St. Leger, apprised by his scouts of their intended approach, had sent a force to waylay them. This was composed of a division of Johnson's greens, led by his brother-in-law, Major Watts; a company of rangers under Colonel Butler, a refugee from this neighborhood, and a strong body of Indians under Brant. The troops were stationed in front just beyond the ravine, the Indians along each side of the road. The plan of the ambuscade was to let the van of the Americans pass the ravine and advance between the concealed parties, when the attack was to be commenced by the troops in front, after which, the Indians were to fall on the Americans in rear and cut off all retreat.

The savages, however, could not restrain

their natural ferocity and hold back as ordered, but discharged their rifles simultaneously with the troops, and instantly rushed forward with spears and tomahawks, yelling like demons, and commencing a dreadful butchery. The rear-guard, which had not entered the ravine, retreated. The main body, though thrown into confusion, defended themselves bravely. One of those severe conflicts ensued, common in Indian warfare, where the combatants take post with their rifles, behind rock and tree, or come to deadly struggle with knife and tomahawk.

The veteran Herkimer was wounded early in the action. A musket ball shattered his leg just below the knee, killing his horse at the same time. He made his men place him on his saddle at the foot of a large beech tree, against the trunk of which he leaned, continuing to give his orders.

The regulars attempted to charge with the bayonet; but the Americans formed themselves in circles back to back, and repelled them. A heavy storm of thunder and rain caused a temporary lull to the fight, during which the patriots changed their ground. Some of them stationed themselves in pairs behind trees; so that when one had fired the other could cover him until he had reloaded; for the savages

movement, were among the first to suffer from it. Colonel Cox was shot down at the first fire, so was a son of Colonel Paris; the colonel himself was taken prisoner, and fell beneath the tomahawk of the famous Red Jacket.

As to General Herkimer, he was conveyed to his residence on the Mohawk River, and died nine days after the battle, not so much from his wound as from bad surgery; sinking gradually through loss of blood from an unskilful amputation. He died like a philosopher and a Christian, smoking his pipe and reading his Bible to the last. His name has been given to a county in that part of the State.*

The sortie of Colonel Willett had been spirited and successful. He attacked the encampments of Sir John Johnson and the Indians, which were contiguous, and strong detachments of which were absent on the ambuscade. Sir John and his men were driven to the river, and the Indians fled to the woods. Willett sacked their camps; loaded wagons with camp equipage, clothing, blankets, and stores of all kinds, seized the baggage and papers of Sir John and of several of his officers, and retreated safely to the fort, just as St.

* Some of the particulars of this action were given to the author by a son of Colonel Paris.

Leger was coming up with a powerful reinforcement. Five colors, which he had brought away with him as trophies, were displayed under the flag of the fort, while his men gave three cheers from the ramparts.

St. Leger now endeavored to operate on the fears of the garrison. His prisoners, it is said, were compelled to write a letter, giving dismal accounts of the affair of Oriskany, and of the impossibility of getting any succor to the garrison; of the probability that Burgoyne and his army were before Albany, and advising surrender to prevent inevitable destruction. It is probable that they were persuaded, rather than compelled, to write the letter, which took its tone from their own depressed feelings and the misrepresentations of those around them. St. Leger accompanied the letter with warnings that, should the garrison persist in resistance, he would not be able to restrain the fury of the savages; who, though held in check for the present, threatened, if further provoked, to revenge the deaths of their warriors and chiefs by slaughtering the garrison, and laying waste the whole valley of the Mohawk.

All this failing to shake the resolution of Gansevoort, St. Leger next issued an appeal to the inhabitants of Tryon County, signed by their old neighbors, Sir John Johnson, Colonel

Claus, and Colonel Butler, promising pardon and protection to all who should submit to royal authority, and urging them to send a deputation of their principal men to overcome the mulish obstinacy of the garrison, and save the whole surrounding country from Indian ravage and massacre. The people of the county, however, were as little to be moved as the garrison.

St. Leger now began to lose heart. The fort proved more capable of defense than he had anticipated. His artillery was too light, and the ramparts, being of sod, were not easily battered. He was obliged reluctantly to resort to the process of sapping and mining, and began to make regular approaches.

Gansevoort, seeing the siege was likely to be protracted, resolved to send to General Schuyler for succor. Colonel Willett volunteered to undertake the perilous errand. He was accompanied by Lieutenant Stockwell, an excellent woodsman, who served as a guide. They left the fort on the 10th, after dark, by a sally-port, passed by the British sentinels and close by the Indian camp, without being discovered, and made their way through bog and morass and pathless forests, and all kinds of risks and hardships, until they reached the German Flats on the Mohawk. Here Willett procured a

couple of horses, and by dint of hoof arrived at the camp of General Schuyler at Stillwater. A change had come over the position of that commander four days previous to the arrival of Colonel Willett, as we shall relate in the ensuing chapter.

Chapter XIX.

Schuyler Hears of the Affair of Oriskany—Applies for Reinforcements—His Appeal to the Patriotism of Stark—Schuyler Superseded—His Conduct thereupon—Relief Sent to Fort Stanwix—Arnold Volunteers to Conduct it—Change of Encampment—Patriotic Determination of Schuyler—Detachment of the Enemy against Bennington—Germans and their Indian Allies—Baum, the Hessian Leader—Stark in the Field—Mustering of the Militia—A Belligerent Parson—Battle of Bennington—Breyman to the Rescue—Routed—Reception of the News in the Rival Camps—Washington Urges New England to Follow up the Blow.

SCHUYLER was in Albany in the early part of August, making stirring appeals in every direction for reinforcements. Burgoyne was advancing upon him ; he had received news of the disastrous affair at Oriskany, and the death of General Herkimer, and Tryon County was crying to him for assistance. One of his appeals was to the veteran John Stark, the comrade of Putnam in

the French war and the battle of Bunker's Hill. He had his farm in the Hampshire Grants, and his name was a tower of strength among the Green Mountain Boys. But Stark was soured with government, and had retired from service, his name having been omitted in the list of promotions. Hearing that he was on a visit to Lincoln's camp at Manchester, Schuyler wrote to that General, "Assure General Stark that I have acquainted Congress of his situation, and that I trust and entreat he will, in the present alarming crisis, waive his right; the greater the sacrifice he makes to his feelings, the greater will be the honor due to him for not having suffered any consideration whatever to come in competition with the weal of his country: entreat him to march immediately to our army."

Schuyler had instant call to practise the very virtue he was inculcating. He was about to mount his horse on the 10th, to return to the camp at Stillwater, when a despatch from Congress was put into his hand containing the resolves which recalled him to attend a court of inquiry about the affair of Ticonderoga, and requested Washington to appoint an officer to succeed him.

Schuyler felt deeply the indignity of being thus recalled at a time when an engagement

was apparently at hand, but endeavored to console himself with the certainty that a thorough investigation of his conduct would prove how much he was entitled to the thanks of his country. He intimated the same in his reply to Congress; in the meantime, he considered it his duty to remain at his post until his successor should arrive, or some officer in the department be nominated to the command. Returning, therefore, to the camp at Stillwater, he continued to conduct the affairs of the army with unremitting zeal. "Until the country is in safety," said he, "I will stifle my resentment."

His first care was to send relief to Ganse-voort and his beleaguered garrison. Eight hundred men were all that he could spare from his army in its present threatened state. A spirited and effective officer was wanted to lead them. Arnold was in camp; recently sent on as an efficient coadjutor, by Washington; he was in a state of exasperation against the government, having just learnt that the question of rank had been decided against him in Congress. Indeed, he would have retired instantly from the service, had not Schuyler prevailed on him to remain until the impending danger was over. It was hardly to be expected, that in his irritated mood he would

accept the command of the detachment, if offered to him. Arnold, however, was a combustible character. The opportunity of an exploit flashed on his adventurous spirit. He stepped promptly forward and volunteered to lead the enterprise. "No public nor private injury or insult," said he, "shall prevail on me to forsake the cause of my injured and oppressed country, until I see peace and liberty restored to her, or nobly die in the attempt."*

After the departure of this detachment, it was unanimously determined in a council of war of Schuyler and his general officers, that the post at Stillwater was altogether untenable with their actual force; part of the army, therefore, retired to the islands at the fords on the mouth of the Mohawk River, where it empties into the Hudson, and a brigade was posted above the Falls of the Mohawk, called the Cohoes, to prevent the enemy from crossing there. It was considered a strong position, where they could not be attacked without great disadvantage to the assailant.

The feelings of Schuyler were more and more excited as the game of war appeared drawing to a crisis. "I am resolved," writes he to his friend Duane, "to make another sacrifice to my country, and risk the censure of Congress

* Letter to Gates. Gates's *Papers*.

by remaining in this quarter *after* I am relieved, and bringing up the militia to the support of this weak army."

As yet he did not know who was to be his successor in the command. A letter from Duane informed him that General Gates was the man.

Still the noble part of Schuyler's nature was in the ascendant. "Your fears may be up," writes he in reply, "lest the ill-treatment I have experienced at his hands, should so far get the better of my judgment as to embarrass him. Do not, my dear friend, be uneasy on that account. I am incapable of sacrificing my country to a resentment, however just; and I trust I shall give an example of what a good citizen ought to do when he is in my situation."

We will now take a view of occurrences on the right and left of Burgoyne, and show the effect of Schuyler's measures, poorly seconded as they were, in crippling and straitening the invading army. And first, we will treat of the expedition against Bennington. This was a central place, whither the live stock was driven from various parts of the Hampshire Grants, and whence the American army derived its supplies. It was a great deposit, also, of grain of various kinds, and of wheel carriages; the

usual guard was militia, varying from day to day. Bennington was to be surprised. The country was to be scoured from Rockingham to Otter Creek, in quest of provisions for the army, horses and oxen for draft, and horses for the cavalry. All public magazines were to be sacked. All cattle belonging to royalists, and which could be spared by their owners, were to be paid for. All rebel flocks and herds were to be driven away.

Generals Phillips and Riedesel demurred strongly to the expedition, but their counsels were outweighed by those of Colonel Skene, the royalist. He knew, he said, all the country thereabout. The inhabitants were as five to one in favor of the royal cause, and would be prompt to turn out on the first appearance of a protecting army. He was to accompany the expedition, and much was expected from his personal influence and authority.

Lieutenant-Colonel Baum was to command the detachment. He had under him, according to Burgoyne, two hundred dismounted dragoons of the regiment of Riedesel, Captain Fraser's marksmen, which were the only British, all the Canadian volunteers, a party of the provincials who perfectly knew the country, one hundred Indians, and two light pieces of cannon. The whole detachment amounted to

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about five hundred men. The dragoons, it was expected, would supply themselves with horses in the course of the foray, and a skeleton corps of royalists would be filled up by recruits.

The Germans had no great liking for the Indians as fellow campaigners; especially those who had come from Upper Canada under St. Luc. "These savages are heathens, huge, warlike, and enterprising, but wicked as Satan," writes a Hessian officer. "Some say they are cannibals, but I do not believe it; though in their fury they will tear the flesh off their enemies with their teeth. They have a martial air, and their wild ornaments become them." * St. Luc, who commanded them, had been a terror to the English colonists in the French war, and it was intimated that he possessed great treasures of "old English scalps." He and his warriors, however, had disappeared from camp since the affair of Miss McCrea. The present were Indians from Lower Canada.

The choice of German troops for this foray, was much sneered at by the British officers. "A corps could not have been found in the whole army," said they, "so unfit for a service requiring rapidity of motion, as Riedesel's dragoons. The very hat and sword of one of

* Schlözer's *Briefwechsel*, Th. iii., Heft xvii.

them weighed nearly as much as the whole equipment of a British soldier. The worst British regiment in the service would march two miles to their one."

To be nearer at hand in case assistance should be required, Burgoyne encamped on the east side of the Hudson, nearly opposite Saratoga, throwing over a bridge of boats by which General Fraser, with the advanced guard, crossed to that place. Colonel Baum set out from camp at break of day, on the 13th of August. All that had been predicted of his movements was verified. The badness of the road, the excessive heat of the weather, and the want of carriages and horses were alleged in excuse; but slow and unapt men ever meet with impediments. Some cattle, carts, and wagons, were captured at Cambridge; a few horses also were brought in; but the Indians killed or drove off all that fell into their hands, unless they were paid in cash for their prizes. "The country people of these parts," writes the Hessian narrator, "came in crowds to Governor Skene, as he was called, and took the oath of allegiance; but even these faithless people," adds he, "were subsequently our bitterest assailants."

Baum was too slow a man to take a place by surprise. The people of Bennington heard of

his approach and were on the alert. The veteran Stark was there with eight or nine hundred troops. During the late alarms the militia of the State had been formed into two brigades, one to be commanded by General William Whipple; Stark had with difficulty been prevailed upon to accept the command of the other, upon the express condition that he should not be obliged to join the main army, but should be left to his own discretion, to make war in his own partisan style, hovering about the enemy in their march through the country, and accountable to none but the authorities of New Hampshire.

General Lincoln had informed Stark of the order of General Schuyler, that all the militia should repair to Stillwater, but the veteran refused to comply. He had taken up arms, he said, in a moment of exigency, to defend the neighborhood, which would be exposed to the ravages of the enemy, should he leave it, and he held himself accountable solely to the authorities of New Hampshire. This act of insubordination might have involved the doughty but somewhat testy old general in subsequent difficulty, had not his sword carved out an ample excuse for him.

Having heard that Indians had appeared at Cambridge, twelve miles to the north of Ben-

nington, on the 13th, he sent out two hundred men under Colonel Gregg in quest of them. In the course of the night he learnt that they were mere scouts in advance of a force marching upon Bennington. He immediately rallied his brigade, called out the militia of the neighborhood, and sent off for Colonel Seth Warner (the quondam associate of Ethan Allen) and his regiment of militia, who were with General Lincoln at Manchester.

Lincoln instantly detached them, and Warner and his men marched all night through drenching rain, arriving at Stark's camp in the morning, dripping wet.

Stark left them at Bennington to dry and rest themselves, and then to follow on; in the meantime, he pushed forward with his men to support the party sent out the preceding day, under Gregg, in quest of the Indians. He met them about five miles off, in full retreat, Baum and his force a mile in their rear.

Stark halted and prepared for action. Baum also halted, posted himself on a high ground at a bend of the little river Walloomscoick, and began to intrench himself. Stark fell back a mile, to wait for reinforcements and draw down Baum from his strong position. A skirmish took place between the advance guards;

thirty of Baum's men were killed, and two Indian chiefs.

An incessant rain on the 15th prevented an attack on Baum's camp, but there was continual skirmishing. The colonel strengthened his intrenchments, and finding he had a larger force to contend with than he had anticipated, sent off in all haste to Burgoyne for reinforcements. Colonel Breyman marched off immediately, with five hundred Hessian grenadiers and infantry and two six-pounders, leaving behind him his tents, baggage, and standards. He also found the roads so deep, and the horses so bad, that he was nearly two days getting four-and-twenty miles. The tactics of the Hessians were against them. "So foolishly attached were they to forms of discipline," writes a British historian, "that in marching through thickets they stopped ten times an hour to dress their ranks." It was here, in fact, that they most dreaded the American rifle. "In the open field," said they, "the rebels are not much; but they are redoubtable in the woods." *

In the meantime the more alert and active Americans had been mustering from all quarters to Stark's assistance, with such weapons as they had at hand. During the night of the 15th, Colonel Symonds arrived with a body of

* Schlözer's *Briefwechsel.*

Berkshire militia. Among them was a belligerent parson, full of fight, Allen by name, possibly of the bellicose family of the hero of Ticonderoga. "General," cried he, "the people of Berkshire have been often called out to no purpose; if you don't give them a chance to fight now they will never turn out again." "You would not turn out now, while it is dark and raining, would you?" demanded Stark. "Not just now," was the reply. "Well, if the Lord should once more give us sunshine, and I don't give you fighting enough," rejoined the veteran, "I 'll never ask you to turn out again."

On the following morning the sun shone bright, and Stark prepared to attack Baum in his intrenchments; though he had no artillery, and his men, for the most part, had only their ordinary brown firelocks without bayonets. Two hundred of his men, under Colonel Nichols, were detached to the rear of the enemy's left; three hundred, under Colonel Herrick, to the rear of his right; they were to join their forces and attack him in the rear, while Colonels Hubbard and Stickney, with two hundred men, diverted his attention in front.

Colonel Skene and the royalists, when they saw the Americans issuing out of the woods on different sides, persuaded themselves, and

endeavored to persuade Baum, that these were the loyal people of the country flocking to his standard. The Indians were the first to discover the truth. "The woods are full of Yankees," cried they, and retreated in single file between the troops of Nichols and Herrick, yelling like demons and jingling cow bells. Several of them, however, were killed or wounded as they thus ran the gauntlet.

At the first sound of firearms Stark, who had remained with the main body in camp, mounted his horse and gave the word, *forward!* He had promised his men the plunder of the British camp. The homely speech made by him when in sight of the enemy, has often been cited. "Now, my men! There are the red coats! Before night they must be ours, or Molly Stark will be a widow!"

Baum soon found himself assailed on every side, but he defended his works bravely. His two pieces of artillery, advantageously planted, were very effective, and his troops, if slow in march, were steady in action. For two hours the discharge of fire-arms was said to have been like the constant rattling of the drum. Stark in his despatches compared it to a "continued clap of thunder." It was the hottest fight he had ever seen. He inspired his men with his own impetuosity. They drove the

royalist troops upon the Hessians, and pressing after them stormed the works with irresistible fury. A Hessian eye-witness declares that this time the rebels fought with desperation, pressing within eight paces of the loaded cannon to take surer aim at the artillerists. The latter were slain; the cannon captured. The royalists and Canadians took flight, and escaped to the woods. The Germans still kept their ground, and fought bravely, until there was not a cartridge left. Baum and his dragoons then took to their broadswords and the infantry to their bayonets, and endeavored to cut their way to a road in the woods, but in vain; many were killed, more wounded, Baum among the number, and all who survived were taken prisoners.*

The victors now dispersed, some to collect booty, some to attend to the wounded, some to guard the prisoners, and some to seek refreshments, being exhausted by hunger and fatigue. At this critical juncture, Breyman's tardy reinforcement came, making its way heavily and slowly to the scene of action, joined by many of the enemy who had fled. Attempts were made to rally the militia; but they were in complete confusion. Nothing

* *Briefe aus Amerika.* Schlözer's *Briefwechsel*, Th. iii., Heft xiii.

would have saved them from defeat, had not Colonel Seth Warner's corps fortunately arrived from Bennington, fresh from repose, and advanced to meet the enemy, while the others regained their ranks. It was four o'clock in the afternoon when this second action commenced. It was fought from wood to wood, and hill to hill, for several miles, until sunset. The last stand of the enemy was at Van Schaick's mill, where, having expended all their ammunition, of which each man had forty rounds, they gave way, and retreated, under favor of the night, leaving two field-pieces and all their baggage in the hands of the Americans. Stark ceased to pursue them, lest in the darkness his men should fire upon each other. "Another hour of daylight," said he in his report, "and I should have captured the whole body." The veteran had had a horse shot under him, but escaped without wound or bruise.

Four brass field-pieces, nine hundred dragoon swords, a thousand stand of arms, and four ammunition wagons were the spoils of this victory. Thirty-two officers, five hundred and sixty-four privates, including Canadians and loyalists, were taken prisoners. The number of slain was very considerable, but could not be ascertained, many having fallen in the

woods. The brave but unfortunate Baum did not long survive. The Americans had one hundred killed and wounded.

Burgoyne was awakened in his camp towards daylight of the 17th, by tidings that Colonel Baum had surrendered. Next came word that Colonel Breyman was engaged in severe and doubtful conflict. The whole army was roused, and were preparing to hasten to his assistance, when one report after another gave assurance that he was on his way back in safety. The main body, therefore, remained in camp at the Batten kiln; but Burgoyne forded that stream with the 47th regiment and pushed forward until four o'clock, when he met Breyman and his troops, weary and haggard with hard fighting and hard marching, in hot weather. In the evening all returned to their old encampments.*

General Schuyler was encamped on Van Schaick's Island at the mouth of the Mohawk River, when a letter from General Lincoln, dated Bennington, August 18th, informed him of "the capital blow given the enemy by General Stark." "I trust," replies he, August 19th, "that the severity with which they have been handled will retard General Burgoyne's progress. Part of his force was yesterday

* Schölzer's *Briefwechsel*, Th. iii., Heft xiii.

afternoon about three miles and a half above Stillwater. If the enemy have entirely left that part of the country you are in, I think it would be advisable for you to move towards Hudson River tending towards Stillwater."

"Governor Clinton," writes he to Stark on the same day, "is coming up with a body of militia, and I trust that after what the enemy have experienced from you, their progress will be retarded, and that we shall see them driven out of this part of the country."

He now hoped to hear that Arnold had raised the siege of Fort Stanwix. "If that take place," said he, "it will be possible to engage two or three hundred Indians to join this army, and Congress may rest assured that my best endeavors shall not be wanting to accomplish it."

Tidings of the affair of Bennington reached Washington, just before he moved his camp from the neighborhood of Philadelphia to Wilmington, and it relieved his mind from a world of anxious perplexity. In a letter to Putnam he writes, "As there is not now the least danger of General Howe's going to New England, I hope the whole force of that country will turn out, and, by following the great stroke struck by General Stark near Bennington, entirely crush General Burgoyne, who, by his

letter to Colonel Baum, seems to be in want of almost everything."

We will now give the fate of Burgoyne's detachment, under St. Leger, sent to capture Fort Stanwix, and ravage the valley of the Mohawk.

Chapter XX.

Stratagem of Arnold to Relieve Fort Stanwix—Yan Yost Cuyler—The Siege Pressed—Indians Intractable—Success of Arnold's Stratagem—Harassed Retreat of St. Leger—Moral Effect of the Two Blows Given to the Enemy—Brightening Prospects in the American Camp—Arrival of Gates—Magnanimous Conduct of Schuyler—Poorly Requited by Gates—Correspondence between Gates and Burgoyne Concerning the Murder of Miss McCrea.

ARNOLD'S march to the relief of Fort Stanwix was slower than suited his ardent and impatient spirit. He was detained in the valley of the Mohawk by bad roads, by the necessity of waiting for baggage and ammunition wagons, and for militia recruits who turned out reluctantly. He sent missives to Colonel Gansevoort assuring him that he would relieve him in the course of a few days. "Be under no kind of apprehension," writes he. "I know the strength of the enemy, and *how to deal with them.*"

In fact, conscious of the smallness of his force, he had resorted to stratagem, sending emissaries ahead to spread exaggerated reports of the number of his troops, so as to work on the fears of the enemy's Indian allies and induce them to desert. The most important of these emissaries was one Yan Yost Cuyler, an eccentric half-witted fellow, known throughout the country as a rank tory. He had been convicted as a spy, and only spared from the halter on the condition that he would go into St. Leger's camp, and spread alarming reports among the Indians, by whom he was well known. To insure a faithful discharge of his mission, Arnold detained his brother as a hostage.

On his way up the Mohawk Valley, Arnold was joined by a New York regiment, under Colonel James Livingston, sent by Gates to reinforce him. On arriving at the German Flats he received an express from Colonel Gansevoort, informing him that he was still besieged, but in high spirits and under no apprehensions. In a letter to Gates, written from the German Flats (August 21st), Arnold says, "I leave this place this morning with twelve hundred continental troops and a handful of militia for Fort Schuyler, still besieged by a number equal to ours. You will hear of my being victorious—

or no more. As soon as the safety of this part of the country will permit, I will fly to your assistance." *

All this while St. Leger was advancing his parallels and pressing the siege; while provisions and ammunition were rapidly decreasing within the fort. St. Leger's Indian allies, however, were growing sullen and intractable. This slow kind of warfare, this war with the spade, they were unaccustomed to, and they by no means relished it. Beside, they had been led to expect easy times, little fighting, many scalps, and much plunder; whereas they had fought hard, lost many of their best chiefs, been checked in their cruelty, and gained no booty.

At this juncture, scouts brought word that a force one thousand strong was marching to the relief of the fort. Eager to put his savages in action, St. Leger in a council of war offered to their chiefs to place himself at their head, with three hundred of his best troops, and meet the enemy as they advanced. It was agreed, and they sallied forth together to choose a fighting ground. By this time rumors stole into the camp doubling the number of the approaching enemy. Burgoyne's whole army were said to have been defeated. Lastly

* Gates's *Papers*.

came Yan Yost Cuyler, with his coat full of bullet holes, giving out that he had escaped from the hands of the Americans, and had been fired upon by them. His story was believed, for his wounded coat corroborated it, and he was known to be a royalist. Mingling among his old acquaintances, the Indians, he assured them that the Americans were close at hand and "numerous as the leaves on the trees."

Arnold's stratagem succeeded. The Indians, fickle as the winds, began to desert. Sir John Johnson and Colonels Claus and Butler endeavored in vain to reassure and retain them. In a little while two hundred had decamped, and the rest threatened to do so likewise, unless St. Leger retreated.

The unfortunate colonel found too late what little reliance was to be placed upon Indian allies. He determined, on the 22d, to send off his sick, his wounded, and his artillery by Wood Creek that very night, and to protect them by the line of march. The Indians, however, goaded on by Arnold's emissaries, insisted on instant retreat. St. Leger still refused to depart before nightfall. The savages now became ungovernable. They seized upon liquor of the officers about to be embarked, and getting intoxicated, behaved like very fiends.

In a word, St. Leger was obliged to decamp about noon, in such hurry and confusion that he left his tents standing, and his artillery, with most of his baggage, ammunition, and stores, fell into the hands of the Americans.

A detachment from the garrison pursued and harassed him for a time; but his greatest annoyance was from his Indian allies, who plundered the boats which conveyed such baggage as had been brought off; murdered all stragglers who lagged in the rear, and amused themselves by giving false alarms to keep up the panic of the soldiery; who would throw away muskets, knapsacks, and everything that impeded their flight.

It was not until he reached Onondaga Falls, that St. Leger discovered by a letter from Burgoyne, and floating reports brought by the bearer, that he had been the dupe of a *ruse de guerre*, and that at the time the advancing foe were reported to be close upon his haunches, they were not within forty miles of him.

Such was the second blow to Burgoyne's invading army; but before the news of it reached that doomed commander, he had already been half paralyzed by the disaster at Bennington.

The moral effect of these two blows was such as Washington had predicted. Fortune, so long adverse, seemed at length to have taken

a favorable turn. People were roused from their despondency. There was a sudden exultation throughout the country. The savages had disappeared in their native forests. The German veterans, so much vaunted and dreaded, had been vanquished by militia, and British artillery captured by men, some of whom had never seen a cannon.

Means were now augmenting in Schuyler's hands ; Colonels Livingston and Pierre Van Courtlandt, forwarded by Putnam, were arrived. Governor Clinton was daily expected with New York militia from the Highlands. The arrival of Arnold was anticipated with troops and artillery, and Lincoln with the New England militia. At this propitious moment, when everything was ready for the sickle to be put into the harvest, General Gates arrived in the camp.

Schuyler received him with the noble courtesy to which he pledged himself. After acquainting him with all the affairs of the department, the measures he had taken and those he had projected, he informed him of his having signified to Congress his intention to remain in that quarter for the present, and render every service in his power ; and he entreated Gates to call upon him for counsel and assistance whenever he thought proper.

Gates was in high spirits. His letters to Washington show how completely he was aware that an easy path of victory had been opened for him. "Upon my leaving Philadelphia," writes he, "the prospect this way appeared most gloomy, but the severe checks the enemy have met with at Bennington and Tryon County, have given a more pleasing view of public affairs. Particular accounts of the signal victory gained by General Stark, and of the severe blow General Herkimer gave Sir John Johnson and the scalpers under his command, have been transmitted to your Excellency by General Schuyler. I anxiously expect the arrival of an express from General Arnold, with an account of the total defeat of the enemy in that quarter.

"I cannot sufficiently thank your Excellency for sending Colonel Morgan's corps to this army. They will be of the greatest service to it; for, until the late success this way, I am told the army were quite panic-struck by the Indians, and their tory and Canadian assassins in Indian dress."

Governor Clinton was immediately expected in camp, and he intended to consult with him and General Lincoln upon the best plan to distress, and, he hoped, finally to defeat the enemy. "We shall no doubt," writes he,

"unanimously agree in sentiment with your Excellency, to keep Generals Lincoln and Stark upon the flank and rear of the enemy, while the main body opposes them in front."

Not one word does he say of consulting Schuyler, who, more than any one else, was acquainted with the department and its concerns, who was in constant correspondence with Washington, and had co-operated with him in effecting the measures which had produced the present promising situation of affairs. So far was he from responding to Schuyler's magnanimity, and profiting by his nobly offered counsel and assistance, that he did not even ask him to be present at his first council of war, although he invited up General Ten Broeck of the militia from Albany to attend it.

His conduct in this respect provoked a caustic remark from the celebrated Gouverneur Morris. "The commander-in-chief of the Northern department," said he, "may, if he please, neglect to ask or disdain to receive advice, but those who know him, will, I am sure be convinced that he wants it."

Gates opened hostilities against Burgoyne with the pen. He had received a letter from that commander, complaining of the harsh treatment experienced by the royalists cap-

tured at Bennington. "Duty and principle," writes Burgoyne, "made me a public enemy to the Americans who have taken up arms; but I seek to be a generous one; nor have I the shadow of resentment against any individual who does not induce it by acts derogatory to those maxims upon which all men of honor think alike."

There was nothing in this that was not borne out by the conduct and character of Burgoyne; but Gates seized upon the occasion to assail that commander in no measured terms in regard to his Indian allies.

"That the savages," said he, "should in their warfare mangle the unhappy prisoners who fall into their hands, is neither new nor extraordinary; but that the famous General Burgoyne, in whom the fine gentleman is united with the scholar, should hire the savages of America to scalp Europeans; nay more, that he should pay a price for each scalp so barbarously taken, is more than will be believed in Europe, until authenticated facts shall in every gazette confirm the horrid tale."

After this prelude, he went on to state the murder of Miss McCrea, alleging that her murderer was employed by Burgoyne. "Two parents," added he, "with their six children, were treated with the same inhumanity while

quietly resting in their once happy and peaceful dwelling. Upwards of one hundred men, women, and children, have perished by the hands of the ruffians, to whom it is asserted you have paid the price of blood."

Gates showed his letter to General Lincoln and Colonel Wilkinson, who demurred to its personality; but he evidently conceived it an achievement of the pen, and spurned their criticism.*

Burgoyne, in a manly reply, declared that he would have disdained to justify himself from such rhapsodies of fiction and calumny, but that his silence might be construed into an admission of their truth, and lead to acts of retaliation. He pronounced all the intelligence cited respecting the cruelties of the Indians to be false, with the exception of the case of Miss McCrea. This he put in its true light, adding, that it had been as sincerely

* After General Gates had written his letter to Burgoyne, he called General Lincoln and myself into his apartment, read it to us, and requested our opinion of it, which we declined giving; but being pressed by him, with diffidence we concurred in judgment, that he had been too personal; to which the old gentleman replied with his characteristic bluntness, "By G— ! I don't believe either of you can mend it": and the consultation terminated.—Wilkinson's *Memoirs*, vol. ii., p. 231.

lamented, and abhorred by him, as it could be by the tenderest of her friends. "I would not," declared he, "be conscious of the acts you presume to impute to me, for the whole continent of America; though the wealth of worlds was in its bowels, and a paradise upon its surface."

We have already shown what was the real conduct of Burgoyne in this deplorable affair, and General Gates could and should have ascertained it, before "he presumed to impute" to a gallant antagonist and a humane and cultivated gentleman, such base and barbarous policy. It was the government under which Burgoyne served that was chargeable with the murderous acts of the savages. He is rather to be pitied for being obliged to employ such hell-hounds, whom he endeavored in vain to hold in check. Great Britain reaped the reward of her policy in the odium which it cast upon her cause, and the determined and successful opposition which it provoked in the American bosom.

We will now shift the scene to Washington's camp at Wilmington, where we left him watching the operations of the British fleet, and preparing to oppose the army under Sir William Howe in his designs upon Philadelphia.

Chapter XXII.

Landing of Howe's Army on Elk River—Measures to Check it—Exposed Situation of Washington in Reconnoitering—Alarm of the Country—Proclamation of Howe—Arrival of Sullivan—Foreign Officers in Camp—Deborre—Conway—Fleury—Count Pulaski—First Appearance in the Army of "Light-Horse Harry" of Virginia—Washington's Appeal to the Army—Movements of the Rival Forces—Battle of the Brandywine—Retreat of the Americans—Halt in Chester—Scenes in Philadelphia during the Battle—Congress Orders out Militia—Clothes Washington with Extraordinary Powers—Removes to Lancaster—Rewards to Foreign Officers.

ON the 25th of August, the British army under General Howe began to land from the fleet in Elk River, at the bottom of Chesapeake Bay. The place where they landed was about six miles below the Head of Elk (now Elkton), a small town, the capital of Cecil County. This was seventy miles from Philadelphia; ten miles

farther from that city than they had been when encamped at Brunswick. The intervening country, too, was less open than the Jerseys, and cut up by deep streams. Sir William had chosen this circuitous route in the expectation of finding friends among the people of Cecil County, and of the lower counties of Pennsylvania; many of whom were Quakers and noncombatants, and many persons disaffected to the patriot cause.

Early in the evening, Washington received intelligence that the enemy were landing. There was a quantity of public and private stores at the Head of Elk, which he feared would fall into their hands if they moved quickly. Every attempt was to be made to check them. The divisions of Generals Greene and Stephen were within a few miles of Wilmington; orders were sent for them to march thither immediately. The two other divisions, which had halted at Chester to refresh, were to hurry forward. Major-General Armstrong, the same who had surprised the Indian village of Kittaning in the French war, and who now commanded the Pennsylvania militia, was urged to send down, in the cool of the night, all the men he could muster, properly armed. "The first attempt of the enemy," writes Washington, "will be with light parties to seize

horses, carriages, and cattle, and we must endeavor to check them at the outset."

General Rodney, therefore, who commanded the Delaware militia, was ordered to throw out scouts and patrols toward the enemy to watch their motions; and to move near them with his troops, as soon as he should be reinforced by the Maryland militia.

Light troops were sent out early in the morning to hover about and harass the invaders. Washington himself, accompanied by General Greene and the Marquis de Lafayette and their aides, rode forth to reconnoiter the country in the neighborhood of the enemy, and determine how to dispose of his forces when they should be collected. The only eminences near Elk were Iron Hill and Gray's Hill; the latter within two miles of the enemy. It was difficult, however, to get a good view of their encampment, and judge of the number that had landed. Hours were passed in riding from place to place reconnoitering, and taking a military survey of the surrounding country. At length a severe storm drove the party to take shelter in a farm-house. Night came on dark and stormy. Washington showed no disposition to depart. His companions became alarmed for his safety; there was risk of his being surprised, being so near the enemy's

camp. He was not to be moved either by advice or entreaties, but remained all night under the farmer's roof. When he left the house at daybreak, however, says Lafayette, he acknowledged his imprudence, and that the most insignificant traitor might have caused his ruin.

Indeed, he ran a similar risk to that which in the previous year had produced General Lee's catastrophe.

The country was in a great state of alarm. The inhabitants were hurrying off their most valuable effects, so that it was difficult to procure cattle and vehicles to remove the public stores. The want of horses, and the annoyances given by the American light troops, however, kept Howe from advancing promptly, and gave time for the greater part of the stores to be saved.

To allay the public alarm, Howe issued a proclamation on the 27th, promising the strictest regularity and order on the part of his army; with security of person and property to all who remained quietly at home, and pardon to those under arms, who should promptly return to their obedience. The proclamation had a quieting effect, especially among the loyalists, who abounded in these parts.

The divisions of Generals Greene and Stephen were now stationed several miles in ad-

vance of Wilmington, behind White Clay Creek, about ten miles from the Head of Elk. General Smallwood and Colonel Gist had been directed by Congress to take command of the militia of Maryland, who were gathering on the western shore, and Washington sent them orders to co-operate with General Rodney and get in the rear of the enemy.

Washington now felt the want of Morgan and his riflemen, whom he had sent to assist the Northern army; to supply their place, he formed a corps of light troops, by drafting a hundred men from each brigade. The command was given to Major-General Maxwell, who was to hover about the enemy and give them continual annoyance.

The army about this time was increased by the arrival of General Sullivan and his division of three thousand men. He had recently, while encamped at Hanover in Jersey, made a gallant attempt to surprise and capture a corps of one thousand provincials stationed on Staten Island, at a distance from the fortified camp, and opposite the Jersey shore. The attempt was partially successful; a number of the provincials were captured; but the regulars came to the rescue. Sullivan had not brought sufficient boats to secure a retreat. His rear-guard was captured while waiting for the

return of the boats, yet not without a sharp resistance. There was loss on both sides, but the Americans suffered most. Congress had directed Washington to appoint a court of inquiry to investigate the matter; in the meantime Sullivan, whose gallantry remained undoubted, continued in command.

There were now in camp several of those officers and gentlemen from various parts of Europe who had recently pressed into the service, and the suitable employment of whom had been a source of much perplexity to Washington. General Deborre, the French veteran of thirty years' service, commanded a brigade in Sullivan's division. Brigadier-General Conway, the Gallicized Hibernian, was in the division of Lord Stirling. Beside these, there was Louis Fleury, a French gentleman of noble descent, who had been educated as an engineer, and had come out at the opening of the Revolution to offer his services. Washington had obtained for him a captain's commission. Another officer of distinguished merit was the Count Pulaski, a Pole, recommended by Dr. Franklin, as an officer famous throughout Europe for his bravery and conduct in defense of the liberties of his country against Russia, Austria, and Prussia. In fact, he had been commander-in-chief of the forces of the insur-

Count Kasimir Pulaski.

Reproduced from a painting by Oleszkiewicz.

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gents. He served at present as a volunteer in the light horse, and as that department was still without a head, and the cavalry was a main object of attention among the military of Poland, Washington suggested to Congress the expediency of giving him the command of it. "This gentleman, we are told," writes Washington, "has been, like us, engaged in defending the liberty and independence of his country, and has sacrificed his fortune to his zeal for those objects. He derives from hence a title to our respect, that ought to operate in his favor as far as the good of the service will permit."

At this time Henry Lee of Virginia, of military renown, makes his first appearance. He was in the twenty-second year of his age, and in the preceding year had commanded a company of Virginia volunteers. He had recently signalized himself in scouting parties, harassing the enemy's pickets. Washington, in a letter to the President of Congress (August 30th), writes: "This minute twenty-four British prisoners arrived, taken yesterday by Captain Lee of the light horse." His adventurous exploits soon won him notoriety, and the popular appellation of "Light-horse Harry." He was favorably noticed by Washington throughout the war. Perhaps there was something beside his bold, dashing spirit, which won him this

favor. There may have been early recollections connected with it. Lee was the son of the lady who first touched Washington's heart in his schoolboy days, the one about whom he wrote rhymes at Mount Vernon and Greenway Court—his "lowland beauty."

Several days were now passed by the commander-in-chief almost continually in the saddle, reconnoitering the roads and passes, and making himself acquainted with the surrounding country; which was very much intersected by rivers and small streams, running chiefly from northwest to southeast. He had now made up his mind to risk a battle in the open field. It is true his troops were inferior to those of the enemy in number, equipments, and discipline. Hitherto, according to Lafayette, "they had fought combats but not battles." Still those combats had given them experience; and though many of them were militia, or raw recruits, yet the divisions of the army had acquired a facility at moving in large masses, and were considerably improved in military tactics. At any rate, it would never do to let Philadelphia, at that time the capital of the States, fall without a blow. There was a carping spirit abroad; a disposition to cavil and find fault, which was prevalent in Philadelphia, and creeping into Congress; something

of the nature of what had been indulged respecting General Schuyler and the army of the North. Public impatience called for a battle; it was expected even by Europe; his own valiant spirit required it, though hitherto he had been held in check by superior considerations of expediency, and by the controlling interference of Congress. Congress itself now spurred him on, and he gave way to the native ardor of his character.

The British army having effected a landing, in which, by the way, it had experienced but little molestation, was formed into two divisions. One, under Sir William Howe, was stationed at Elkton, with its advanced guard at Gray's Hill, about two miles off. The other division, under General Knyphausen, was on the opposite side of the ferry, at Cecil Court House. On the third of September the enemy advanced in considerable force, with three field-pieces, moving with great caution, as the country was difficult, woody, and not well known to them. About three miles in front of White Clay Creek, their vanguard was encountered by General Maxwell and his light troops, and a severe skirmish took place. The fire of the American sharpshooters and riflemen, as usual, was very effective; but being inferior in number, and having no artillery, Maxwell was

compelled to retreat across White Clay Creek, with the loss of about forty killed and wounded. The loss of the enemy was supposed to be much greater.

The main body of the American army was now encamped on the east side of Red Clay Creek, on the road leading from Elkton to Philadelphia. The light infantry were in the advance, at White Clay Creek. The armies were from eight to ten miles apart. In this position Washington determined to await the threatened attack.

On the 5th of September he made a stirring appeal to the army, in his general orders, stating the object of the enemy, the capture of Philadelphia. They had tried it before, from the Jerseys, and had failed. He trusted they would be again disappointed. In their present attempt their all was at stake. The whole would be hazarded in a single battle. If defeated in that, they were totally undone, and the war would be at an end. Now then was the time for the most strenuous exertions. One bold stroke would free the land from rapine, devastation, and brutal outrage. "Two years," said he, "have we maintained the war, and struggled with difficulties innumerable, but the prospect has brightened. Now is the time to reap the fruit of all our toils and dangers; if we

behave like men this third campaign will be our last." Washington's numerical force at this time was about fifteen thousand men, but from sickness and other causes the effective force, militia included, did not exceed eleven thousand, and most of these were indifferently armed and equipped. The strength of the British was computed at eighteen thousand men, but, it is thought, not more than fifteen thousand were brought into action.

On the 8th, the enemy advanced in two columns; one appeared preparing to attack the Americans in front, while the other extended its left up the west side of the creek, halting at Milltown, somewhat to the right of the American position. Washington now suspected an intention on the part of Sir William Howe to march by his right, suddenly pass the Brandywine, gain the heights north of that stream, and cut him off from Philadelphia. He summoned a council of war, therefore, that evening, in which it was determined immediately to change their position, and move to the river in question. By two o'clock in the morning, the army was under march, and by the next evening was encamped on the high grounds in the rear of the Brandywine. The enemy on the same evening moved to Kennet Square, about seven miles from the American position.

The Brandywine Creek, as it is called, commences with two branches, called the East and West branches, which unite in one stream, flowing from west to east about twenty-two miles, and emptying itself into the Delaware about twenty-five miles below Philadelphia. It has several fords ; one called Chadd's Ford, was at that time the most practicable, and in the direct route from the enemy's camp to Philadelphia. As the principal attack was expected here, Washington made it the centre of his position, where he stationed the main body of his army, composed of Wayne's, Weedon's, and Muhlenberg's brigades, with the light infantry under Maxwell. An eminence immediately above the ford had been intrenched in the night, and was occupied by Wayne and Proctor's artillery. Weedon's and Muhlenberg's brigades, which were Virginian troops, and formed General Greene's division, were posted in the rear on the heights, as a reserve to aid either wing of the army. With these Washington took his stand. Maxwell's light infantry were thrown in the advance, south of the Brandywine, and posted on high ground, each side of the road leading to the ford.

The right wing of the army, commanded by Sullivan, and composed of his division and those of Stephen and Stirling, extended up the

Brandywine two miles beyond Washington's position. Its light troops and videttes were distributed quite up to the forks. A few detachments of ill-organized and undisciplined cavalry extended across the creek on the extreme right. The left wing, composed of the Pennsylvania militia, under Major-General Armstrong, was stationed about a mile and a half below the main body, to protect the lower fords, where the least danger was apprehended. The Brandywine, which ran in front of the whole line, was now the only obstacle, if such it might be called, between the two armies.

Early on the morning of the 11th, a great column of troops was descried advancing on the road leading to Chadd's Ford. A skirt of woods concealed its force, but it was supposed to be the main body of the enemy; if so, a general conflict was at hand.

The Americans were immediately drawn out in order of battle. Washington rode along the front of the ranks, and was everywhere received with acclamations. A sharp firing of small arms soon told that Maxwell's light infantry were engaged with the vanguard of the enemy. The skirmishing was kept up for some time with spirit, when Maxwell was driven across the Brandywine below the ford. The enemy,

who had advanced but slowly, did not attempt to follow, but halted on commanding ground, and appeared to reconnoiter the American position with a view to an attack. A heavy cannonading commenced on both sides, about ten o'clock. The enemy made repeated dispositions to force the ford, which brought on as frequent skirmishes on both sides of the river, for detachments of the light troops occasionally crossed over. One of these skirmishes was more than usually severe; the British flank-guard was closely pressed, a captain and ten or fifteen men were killed, and the guard was put to flight; but a large force came to their assistance, and the Americans were again driven across the stream. All this while there was the noise and uproar of a battle, but little of the reality. The enemy made a great thundering of cannon, but no vigorous onset, and Colonel Harrison, Washington's "old secretary," seeing this cautious and dilatory conduct on their part, wrote a hurried note to Congress, expressing his confident belief that the enemy would be repulsed.

Towards noon came an express from Sullivan, with a note received from a scouting party, reporting that General Howe, with a large body of troops and a park of artillery, was pushing up the Lancaster road, doubtless to cross at the

upper fords and turn the right flank of the American position.

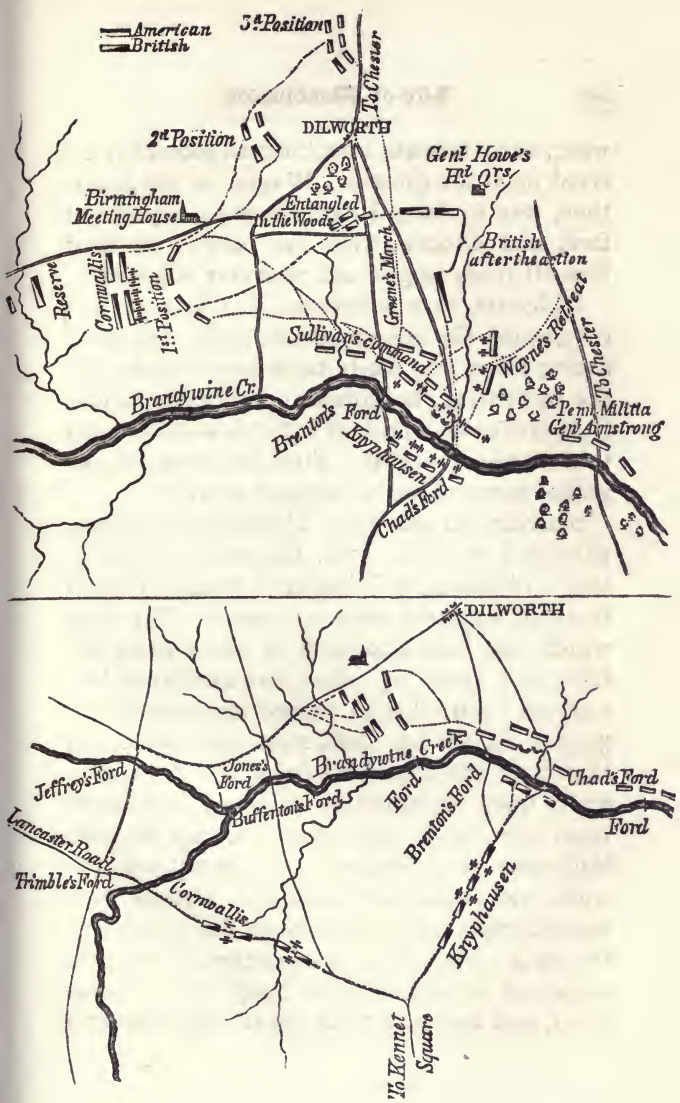
Startled by the information, Washington instantly sent off Colonel Theodoric Bland, with a party of horse, to reconnoiter above the forks and ascertain the truth of the report. In the meantime, he resolved to cross the ford, attack the division in front of him with his whole force, and rout it before the other could arrive. He gave orders for both wings to co-operate, when, as Sullivan was preparing to cross, Major Spicer of the militia rode up, just from the forks, and assured him there was no enemy in that quarter. Sullivan instantly transmitted the intelligence to Washington, whereupon the movement was suspended until positive information could be obtained. After a time came a man of the neighborhood, Thomas Cheyney by name, spurring in all haste, the mare he rode in foam, and himself out of breath. Dashing up to the commander-in-chief, he informed him that he must instantly move, or he would be surrounded. He had come upon the enemy unawares; had been pursued and fired upon, but the fleetness of his mare had saved him. The main body of the British was coming down on the east side of the stream, and was near at hand. Washington replied, that from information just received, it could not be

so. "You are mistaken, general," replied the other vehemently; "my life for it, you are mistaken." Then reiterating the fact with an oath, and making a draft of the road in the sand, "put me under guard," added he, "until you find my story true."

Another despatch from Sullivan corroborated it. Colonel Bland, whom Washington had sent to reconnoiter above the forks, had seen the enemy two miles in the rear of Sullivan's right, marching down at a rapid rate, while a cloud of dust showed that there were more troops behind them.

In fact, the old Long Island stratagem had been played over again. Knyphausen with a small division had engrossed the attention of the Americans by a feigned attack at Chadd's Ford, kept up with great noise and prolonged by skirmishes; while the main body of the army under Cornwallis, led by experienced guides, had made a circuit of seventeen miles, crossed the two forks of the Brandywine, and arrived in the neighborhood of Birmingham meeting-house, two miles to the right of Sullivan. It was a capital stratagem, secretly and successfully conducted.

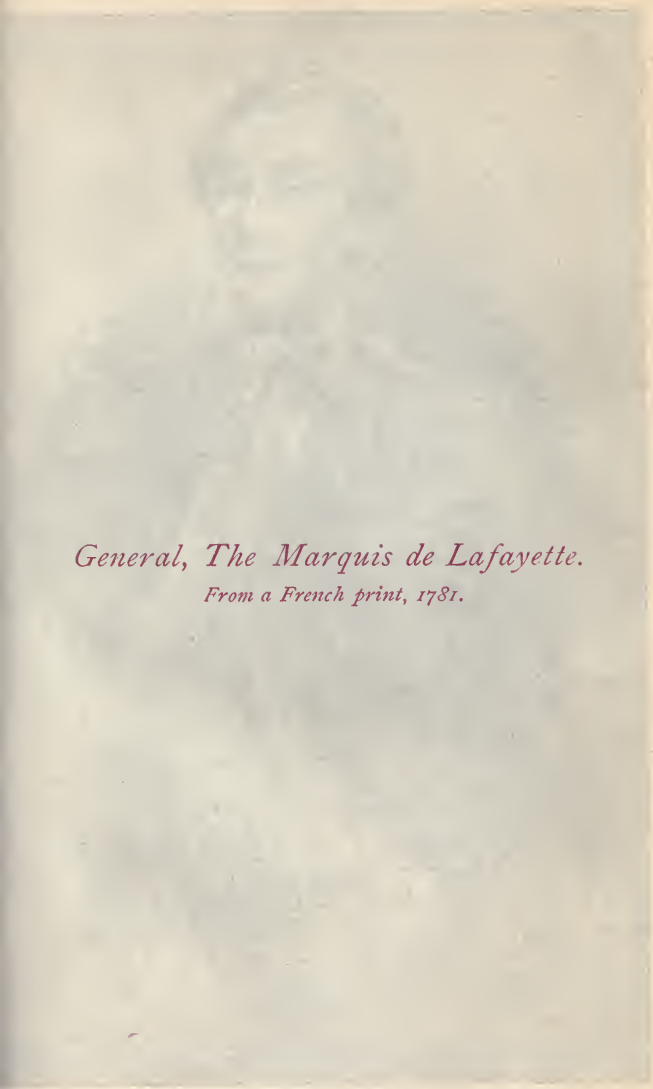
Finding that Cornwallis had thus gained the rear of the army, Washington sent orders to Sullivan to oppose him with the whole right


American
British
3d Position
To Chester
2d Position
DILWORTH
Gen.l Howe's
Hd Qrs.
Birmingham
Meeting House
Entangled
in the Woods
Greene's March
British
after the action
Reserve
Cornwallis
1st Position
Sullivan's command
Wayne's Retreat
To Chester
Brandywine Cr.
Brenton's Ford
Kryphausen
Penn. Militia
Gen.l Armstrong
Chad's Ford
DILWORTH
Brandywine Creek
Jeffrey's Ford
Jones's
Ford
Chad's Ford
Buffertons Ford
Ford
Brenton's Ford
Lancaster Road
Trimble's Ford
Cornwallis
Kryphausen
To Kennet
Square

wing, each brigade attacking as soon as it arrived upon the ground. Wayne, in the meantime, was to keep Knyphausen at bay at the ford, and Greene, with the reserve, to hold himself ready to give aid wherever required.

Lafayette, as a volunteer, had hitherto accompanied the commander-in-chief, but now, seeing there was likely to be warm work with the right wing, he obtained permission to join Sullivan, and spurred off with his aide-de-camp to the scene of action. From his narrative, we gather some of the subsequent details.

Sullivan, on receiving Washington's orders, advanced with his own, Stephen's, and Stirling's divisions, and began to form a line in front of an open piece of wood. The time which had been expended in transmitting intelligence, receiving orders, and marching, had enabled Cornwallis to choose his ground and prepare for action. Still more time was given him from the apprehension of the three generals, upon consultation, of being outflanked upon the right; and that the gap between Sullivan's and Stephen's divisions was too wide, and should be closed up. Orders were accordingly given for the whole line to move to the right; and while in execution, Cornwallis advanced rapidly with his troops in the finest order, and opened a brisk fire of musketry and



General, The Marquis de Lafayette.
From a French print, 1781.

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artillery. The Americans made an obstinate resistance, but being taken at a disadvantage, the right and left wings were broken and driven into the woods. The centre stood firm for a while, but being exposed to the whole fire of the enemy, gave way at length also. The British, in following up their advantage, got entangled in the wood. It was here that Lafayette received his wound. He had thrown himself from his horse and was endeavoring to rally the troops, when he was shot through the leg with a musket ball, and had to be assisted into the saddle by his aide-de-camp.

The Americans rallied on a height to the north of Dilworth, and made a still more spirited resistance than at first, but were again dislodged and obliged to retreat with a heavy loss.

While this was occurring with the right wing, Knyphausen, as soon as he learnt from the heavy firing that Cornwallis was engaged, made a push to force his way across Chadd's Ford in earnest. He was vigorously opposed by Wayne with Proctor's artillery, aided by Maxwell and his infantry. Greene was preparing to second him with the reserve, when he was summoned by Washington to the support of the right wing, which the commander-in-chief had found in imminent peril.

Greene advanced to the relief with such celerity, that it is said, on good authority, his divi-

sion accomplished the march, or rather run, of five miles, in less than fifty minutes. He arrived too late to save the battle, but in time to protect the broken masses of the right wing, which he met in full flight. Opening his ranks from time to time for the fugitives, and closing them the moment they had passed, he covered their retreat by a sharp and well-directed fire from his field-pieces. His grand stand was made at a place about a mile beyond Dilworth, which, in reconnoitering the neighborhood, Washington had pointed out to him, as well calculated for a second position, should the army be driven out of the first; and here he was overtaken by Colonel Pinckney, an aide-de-camp of the commander-in-chief, ordering him to occupy this position and protect the retreat of the army. The orders were implicitly obeyed. Weedon's brigade was drawn up in a narrow defile, flanked on both sides by woods, and perfectly commanding the road; while Greene, with Muhlenberg's brigade, passing to the right took his station on the road. The British came on impetuously, expecting but faint opposition. They met with a desperate resistance, and were repeatedly driven back. It was the bloody conflict of the bayonet; deadly on either side, and lasting for a considerable time. Weedon's brigade on the left maintained

its stand also with great obstinacy, and the check given to the enemy by these two brigades, allowed time for the broken troops to retreat. Weedon's was at length compelled by superior numbers to seek the protection of the other brigade, which he did in good order, and Greene gradually drew off the whole division in face of the enemy, who, checked by this vigorous resistance, and seeing the day far spent, gave up all further pursuit.

The brave stand made by these brigades had, likewise, been a great protection to Wayne. He had for a long time withstood the attacks of the enemy at Chadd's Ford, until the approach, on the right, of some of the enemy's troops who had been entangled in the woods, showed him that the right wing had been routed. He now gave up the defense of his post, and retreated by the Chester Road. Knyphausen's troops were too fatigued to pursue him; and the others had been kept back, as we have shown, by Greene's division. So ended the varied conflict of the day.

Lafayette gives an animated picture of the general retreat, in which he became entangled. He had endeavored to rejoin Washington, but loss of blood compelled him to stop and have his wound bandaged. While thus engaged, he came near being captured. All around him

was headlong terror and confusion. Chester road, the common retreat of the broken fragments of the army, from every quarter, was crowded with fugitives, with cannon, with baggage cars, all hurrying forward pell-mell, and obstructing each other; while the thundering of cannon, and volleying of musketry by the contending parties in the rear, added to the confusion and panic of the flight.

The dust, the uproar, and the growing darkness, threw everything into chaos; there was nothing but a headlong struggle forward. At Chester, however, twelve miles from the field of battle, there was a deep stream with a bridge, over which the fugitives would have to pass. Here Lafayette set a guard to prevent their further flight. The commander-in-chief, arriving soon after with Greene and his gallant division, some degree of order was restored, and the whole army took its post behind Chester for the night.

The scene of this battle, which decided the fate of Philadelphia, was within six-and-twenty miles of that city, and each discharge of cannon could be heard there. The two parties of the inhabitants, whig and tory, were to be seen in groups in the squares and public places, waiting the event in anxious silence. At length a courier arrived. His tidings spread consterna-

tion among the friends of liberty. Many left their homes; entire families abandoned everything in terror and despair, and took refuge in the mountains. Congress, the same evening determined to quit the city and repair to Lancaster, whence they subsequently removed to Yorktown. Before leaving Philadelphia, however, they summoned the militia of Pennsylvania, and the adjoining States, to join the main army without delay; and ordered down fifteen hundred continental troops from Putnam's command on the Hudson. They also clothed Washington with power to suspend officers for misbehavior; to fill up all vacancies under the rank of brigadiers; to take all provisions, and other articles necessary for the use of the army, paying, or giving certificates for the same; and to remove, or secure for the benefit of the owners, all goods and effects which might otherwise fall into the hands of the enemy and be serviceable to them. These extraordinary powers were limited to the circumference of seventy miles round headquarters, and were to continue in force sixty days, unless sooner revoked by Congress.

It may be as well here to notice in advance, the conduct of Congress towards some of the foreigners who had mingled in this battle. Count Pulaski, the Polish nobleman, hereto-

fore mentioned, who acted with great spirit as a volunteer in the light horse, riding up within pistol shot of the enemy to reconnoiter, was given a command of cavalry with the rank of brigadier-general. Captain Louis Fleury, also, who had acquitted himself with gallantry, and rendered essential aid in rallying the troops, having had a horse killed under him, was presented by Congress with another, as a testimonial of their sense of his merit.

Lafayette speaks, in his memoirs, of the brilliant manner in which General Conway, the chevalier of St. Louis, acquitted himself at the head of eight hundred men, in the encounter with the troops of Cornwallis near Birmingham meeting-house. The veteran Deborre was not equally fortunate in gaining distinction on this occasion. In the awkward change of position in the line when in front of the enemy, he had been the first to move, and without waiting for orders. The consequence was, his brigade fell into confusion, and was put to flight. He endeavored to rally it, and was wounded in the attempt; but his efforts were in vain. Congress ordered a court of inquiry on his conduct, whereupon he resigned his commission, and returned to France, complaining bitterly of his hard treatment. "It was not his fault," he said, "if American troops would run away."

Chapter XXIII.

General Howe Neglects to Pursue his Advantage—Washington Retreats to Germantown—Recrosses the Schuylkill and Prepares for Another Action—Prevented by Storms of Rain—Retreats to French Creek—Wayne Detached to Fall on the Enemy's Rear—His Pickets Surprised—Massacre of Wayne's Men—Manœuvres of Howe on the Schuylkill—Washington Sends for Reinforcements—Howe Marches into Philadelphia.

NOTWITHSTANDING the rout and precipitate retreat of the American army, Sir William Howe did not press the pursuit but passed the night on the field of battle, and remained the two following days at Dilworth, sending out detachments to take post at Concord and Chester, and seize on Wilmington, whither the sick and wounded were conveyed. "Had the enemy marched directly to Derby," observes Lafayette, "the American army would have been cut up and destroyed; they lost a precious night, and it is

perhaps the greatest fault in a war in which they have committed many." *

Washington, as usual, profited by the inactivity of Howe; quietly retreating through Derby (on the 12th) across the Schuylkill to Germantown, within a short distance of Philadelphia, where he gave his troops a day's repose. Finding them in good spirits, and in nowise disheartened by the recent affair, which they seemed to consider a check rather than a defeat, he resolved to seek the enemy again and give him battle. As preliminary measures, he left some of the Pennsylvania militia in Philadelphia to guard the city; others, under General Armstrong, were posted at the various passes of the Schuylkill, with orders to throw up works; the floating bridge on the lower road was to be unmoored, and the boats collected and taken across the river.

Having taken these precautions against any hostile movement by the lower road, Washington recrossed the Schuylkill on the 14th, and advanced along the Lancaster road, with the intention of turning the left flank of the enemy. Howe, apprised of his intention, made a similar disposition to outflank him. The two armies came in sight of each other, near the Warren

* *Memoires*, tom. i., p. 26.

Tavern, twenty-three miles from Philadelphia, and were on the point of engaging, but were prevented by a violent storm of rain, which lasted for four-and-twenty hours.

This inclement weather was particularly distressing to the Americans, who were scantily clothed, most of them destitute of blankets, and separated from their tents and baggage. The rain penetrated their cartridge-boxes and the ill-fitted locks of their muskets, rendering the latter useless, being deficient in bayonets. In this plight, Washington gave up for the present all thought of attacking the enemy, as their discipline in the use of the bayonet, with which they were universally furnished, would give them a great superiority in action. "The hot-headed politicians," writes one of his officers, "will no doubt censure this part of his conduct, while the more judicious will approve it, as not only expedient, but, in such a case, highly commendable. It was, without doubt, chagrining to a person of his fine feelings, to retreat before an enemy not more in number than himself; yet, with a true greatness of spirit, he sacrificed them to the good of his country." * There was evidently a growing disposition again to criticise Washington's

* *Memoir of Major Samuel Shaw*, by Hon. Josiah Quincy.

movements, yet how well did this officer judge of him.

The only aim, at present, was to get some dry and secure place, where the army might repose and refit. All day, and for a great part of the night, they marched under a cold and pelting rain, and through deep and miry roads, to the Yellow Springs, thence to Warwick, on French Creek; a weary march in stormy weather for troops destitute of every comfort, and nearly a thousand of them actually barefooted. At Warwick furnace, ammunition and a few muskets were obtained, to aid in disputing the passage of the Schuylkill, and the advance of the enemy on Philadelphia.

From French Creek, Wayne was detached with his division, to get in the rear of the enemy, form a junction with General Smallwood and the Maryland militia, and, keeping themselves concealed, watch for an opportunity to cut off Howe's baggage and hospital train; in the meantime, Washington crossed the Schuylkill at Parker's Ford, and took a position to defend that pass of the river.

Wayne set off in the night, and, by a circuitous march, got within three miles of the left wing of the British encamped at Tredyffrin, and concealing himself in a wood, waited the arrival of Smallwood and his militia. At day-

break he reconnoitered the camp, where Howe, checked by the severity of the weather, had contented himself with uniting his columns, and remained under shelter. All day Wayne hovered about the camp; there were no signs of marching; all kept quiet, but lay too compact to be attacked with prudence. He sent repeated messages to Washington, describing the situation of the enemy, and urging him to come on and attack them in their camp. "Their supineness," said he, in one of his notes, "answers every purpose of giving you time to get up: if they attempt to move, I shall attack them at all events. . . . There never was, nor never will be, a finer opportunity of giving the enemy a fatal blow than at present. For God's sake push on as fast as possible."

Again, at a later hour, he writes: "The enemy are very quiet, washing and cooking. I expect General Maxwell on the left flank every moment, and, as I lay on the right, we only want you in their rear to complete Mr. Howe's business. I believe he knows nothing of my situation, as I have taken every precaution to prevent any intelligence getting to him, at the same time keeping a watchful eye on his front, flanks, and rear."

His motions, however, had not been so secret

as he imagined. He was in a part of the country full of the disaffected, and Sir William had received accurate information of his force and where he was encamped. General Grey, with a strong detachment, was sent to surprise him at night in his lair. Late in the evening, when Wayne had set his pickets and sentinels, and thrown out his patrols, a countryman brought him word of the meditated attack. He doubted the intelligence, but strengthened his pickets and patrols, and ordered his troops to sleep upon their arms.

At eleven o'clock, the pickets were driven in at the point of the bayonet—the enemy were advancing in column. Wayne instantly took post on the right of his position, to cover the retreat of the left, led by Colonel Humpton, the second in command. The latter was tardy, and incautiously paraded his troops in front of their fires, so as to be in full relief. The enemy rushed on without firing a gun: all was the silent, but deadly work of the bayonet and the cutlass. Nearly three hundred of Humpton's men were killed or wounded, and the rest put to flight. Wayne gave the enemy some well-directed volleys, and then retreating to a small distance, rallied his troops, and prepared for further defense. The British, however, contented themselves with the blow they had given,

and retired with very little loss, taking with them between seventy and eighty prisoners, several of them officers, and eight baggage wagons, heavily laden.

General Smallwood, who was to have co-operated with Wayne, was within a mile of him at the time of his attack; and would have hastened to his assistance with his well-known intrepidity; but he had not the corps under his command with which he had formerly distinguished himself, and his raw militia fled in a panic at the first sight of a return party of the enemy.

Wayne was deeply mortified by the result of this affair, and, finding it severely criticised in the army, demanded a court-martial, which pronounced his conduct everything that was to be expected from an active, brave, and vigilant officer; whatever blame there was in the matter fell upon his second in command, who, by delay, or misapprehension of orders, and an unskilful position of his troops, had exposed them to be massacred.

On the 21st, Sir William Howe made a rapid march high up the Schuylkill, on the road leading to Reading, as if he intended either to capture the military stores deposited there, or to turn the right of the American army. Washington kept pace with him on the oppo-

site side of the river, up to Pott's Grove, about thirty miles from Philadelphia.

The movement on the part of Howe was a mere feint. No sooner had he drawn Washington so far up the river, than, by a rapid countermarch on the night of the 22d, he got to the ford below, threw his troops across on the next morning, and pushed forward for Philadelphia. By the time Washington was apprised of this counter-movement, Howe was too far on his way to be overtaken by harassed, barefooted troops, worn out by constant marching. Feeling the necessity of immediate reinforcements, he wrote on the same day to Putnam at Peekskill: "The situation of our affairs in this quarter calls for every aid and for every effort. I therefore desire that, without a moment's loss of time, you will detach as many effective rank and file under proper generals and officers, as will make the whole number, including those with General McDougall, amount to twenty-five hundred privates and non-commissioned fit for duty.

"I must urge you, by every motive, to send this detachment without the least possible delay. No considerations are to prevent it. It is our first object to defeat, if possible, the army now opposed to us here."

On the next day (24th) he wrote also to Gen-

eral Gates. "This army has not been able to oppose General Howe's with the success that was wished, and needs a reinforcement. I therefore request, if you have been so fortunate as to oblige General Burgoyne to retreat to Ticonderoga, or if you have not, and circumstances will admit, that you will order Colonel Morgan to join me again with his corps. I sent him up when I thought you materially wanted him; and, if his services can be dispensed with now, you will direct his immediate return."

Having called a council of officers and taken their opinions, which concurred with his own, Washington determined to remain some days at Pott's Grove, to give repose to his troops, and await the arrival of reinforcements.

Sir William Howe halted at Germantown, within a short distance of Philadelphia, and encamped the main body of his army in and about that village; detaching Lord Cornwallis with a large force and a number of officers of distinction, to take formal possession of the city. That general marched into Philadelphia on the 26th, with a brilliant staff and escort, and followed by splendid legions of British and Hessian grenadiers, long trains of artillery and squadrons of light dragoons, the finest troops in the army, all in their best array;

stepping to the swelling music of the band playing "God save the King," and presenting with their scarlet uniforms, their glittering arms and flaunting feathers, a striking contrast to the poor patriot troops, who had recently passed through the same streets, weary and wayworn, and happy if they could cover their raggedness with a brown linen hunting-frock, and decorate their caps with a sprig of evergreen.

In this way the British took possession of the city, so long the object of their awkward attempts, and regarded by them as a triumphant acquisition, having been the seat of the general government, the capital of the confederacy. Washington maintained his characteristic equanimity. "This is an event," writes he to Governor Trumbull, "which we have reason to wish had not happened, and which will be attended with several ill consequences; but I hope it will not be so detrimental as many apprehend, and that a little time and perseverance will give us some favorable opportunity of recovering our loss, and of putting our affairs in a more flourishing condition.

He had heard of the prosperous situation of affairs in the Northern department, and the repeated checks given to the enemy. "I flatter myself," writes he, "we shall soon hear that

they have been succeeded by other fortunate and interesting events, as the two armies, by General Gates's letter, were encamped near each other."

We will now revert to the course of the campaign in that quarter, the success of which he trusted would have a beneficial influence on the operations in which he was personally engaged. Indeed the operations in the Northern department formed, as we have shown, but a part of his general scheme, and were constantly present to his thoughts. His generals had each his own individual enterprise, or his own department to think about; Washington had to think for the whole.

Chapter XXIII.

Dubious Position of Burgoyne—Collects his Forces—Ladies of Distinction in his Camp—Lady Harriet Ackland—The Baroness de Riedesel—American Army Reinforced—Silent Movements of Burgoyne—Watched from the Summit of the Hills—His March along the Hudson—Position of the Two Camps—Battle of the 19th September—Burgoyne Encamps Nearer—Fortifies his Camp—Promised Co-operation by Sir Henry Clinton—Determines to Await it—Quarrel between Gates and Arnold—Arnold Deprived of Command—Burgoyne Waits for Co-operation.

THE checks which Burgoyne had received on right and left, and, in a great measure, through the spontaneous rising of the country, had opened his eyes to the difficulties of his situation, and the errors as to public feeling into which he had been led by his tory counsellors. "The great bulk of the country is undoubtedly with the Congress in principle and zeal," writes he, "and their

measures are executed with a secrecy and despatch that are not to be equalled. Wherever the king's forces point, militia, to the amount of three or four thousand, assemble in twenty-four hours; *they bring with them their subsistence, etc., and, the alarm over, they return to their farms.* The Hampshire Grants, in particular, a country unpeopled and almost unknown last war, now abounds in the most active and most rebellious race of the continent, and hangs like a gathering storm upon my left." What a picture this gives of a patriotic and warlike yeomanry. He complains, too, that no operation had yet been undertaken in his favor; the Highlands of the Hudson had not even been threatened; the consequence was that two brigades had been detached from them to strengthen the army of Gates, strongly posted near the mouth of the Mohawk River, with a superior force of continental troops, and as many militia as he pleased.

Burgoyne declared, that had he any latitude in his orders, he would remain where he was, or perhaps fall back to Fort Edward, where his communication with Lake George would be secure, and wait for some event that might assist his movement forward; his orders, however, were positive to force a junction with Sir William Howe. He did not feel at liberty,

therefore, to remain inactive longer than would be necessary to receive the reinforcements of the additional companies, the German drafts and recruits actually on Lake Champlain, and to collect provisions enough for twenty-five days. These reinforcements were indispensable, because, from the hour he should pass the Hudson River and proceed towards Albany, all safety of communication would cease.

"I yet do not despair," adds he, manfully. "Should I succeed in forcing my way to Albany, and find that country in a state to subsist my army, I shall think no more of a retreat, but, at the worst, fortify there, and await Sir William's operations." *

A feature of peculiar interest is given to this wild and rugged expedition, by the presence of two ladies of rank and refinement, involved in its perils and hardships. One was Lady Harriet Ackland, daughter of the Earl of Ilchester, and wife of Major Ackland of the grenadiers; the other was the Baroness De Riedesel, wife of the Hessian major-general. Both of these ladies had been left behind in Canada. Lady Harriet, however, on hearing that her husband was wounded in the affair at Hubbardton, instantly set out to rejoin him,

* Letter to Lord George Germaine.

regardless of danger, and of her being in a condition before long to become a mother.

Crossing the whole length of Lake Champlain, she found him in a sick bed at Skenesborough. After his recovery, she refused to leave him, but had continued with the army ever since. Her example had been imitated by the Baroness De Riedesel, who had joined the army at Fort Edward, bringing with her her three small children. The friendship and sympathy of these two ladies in all scenes of trial and suffering, and their devoted attachment to their husbands, afford touching episodes in the story of the campaign. When the army was on the march, they followed a little distance in the rear, Lady Harriet in a two-wheeled tumbril, the Baroness in a calash, capable of holding herself, her children and two servants. The latter has left a journal of her campaigning, which we may occasionally cite. "They moved," she says, "in the midst of soldiery, who were full of animation, singing camp songs, and panting for action. They had to travel through almost impassable woods; in a picturesque and beautiful region; but which was almost abandoned by its inhabitants, who had hastened to join the American army." "They added much to its strength," observes she, "as they were all good marksmen, and

the love of their country inspired them with more than ordinary courage."*

The American army had received various reinforcements: the most efficient was Morgan's corps of riflemen, sent by Washington. He had also furnished it with artillery. It was now about ten thousand strong. Schuyler, finding himself and his proffered services slighted by Gates, had returned to Albany. His patriotism was superior to personal resentments. He still continued to promote the success of the campaign, exerting his influence over the Indian tribes, to win them from the enemy. At Albany he held talks and war feasts with deputations of Oneida, Tuscarora, and Onondaga warriors; and procured scouting parties of them, which he sent to the camp, and which proved of great service. His former aide-de-camp, Colonel Brockholst Livingston, and his secretary, Colonel Varick, remained in camp, and kept him informed by letter of passing occurrences. They were much about the person of General Arnold, who, since his return from relieving Fort Stanwix, commanded the left wing of the army. Livingston, in fact, was with him as aide-de-camp. The jealousy of Gates was awakened by these circumstances. He knew their attachment to

* Riedesel's *Memoirs*.

Schuyler, and suspected they were prejudicing the mind of Arnold against him; and this suspicion may have been the origin of a coolness and neglect which he soon evinced toward Arnold himself. These young officers, however, though devotedly attached to Schuyler from a knowledge of his generous character, were above any camp intrigue. Livingston was again looking forward with youthful ardor to a brush with the enemy; but regretted that his former chief would not be there to lead it. "Burgoyne," writes he to Schuyler exultingly, "is in such a situation that he can neither advance nor retire without fighting. A capital battle must soon be fought. I am chagrined to the soul when I think that another person will reap the fruits of your labors." *

Colonel Varick, equally eager, was afraid Burgoyne might be decamping. "His evening guns," writes he, "are seldom heard, and when heard, are very low in sound." †

The dense forests, in fact, which covered the country between the hostile armies, concealed their movements, and as Gates threw out no harassing parties, his information concerning the enemy was vague. Burgoyne, however, was diligently collecting all his forces from

* MS. Letter to Schuyler. † Ibid.

Skenesborough, Fort Anne and Fort George, and collecting provisions; he had completed a bridge by which he intended to pass the Hudson, and force his way to Albany, where he expected co-operation from below. Everything was conducted with as much caution and silence as possible. His troops paraded without beat of drum, and evening guns were discontinued. So stood matters on the 11th of September, when a report was circulated in the American camp, that Burgoyne was in motion, and that he had made a speech to his soldiers, telling them that the fleet had returned to Canada, and their only safety was to fight their way to New York.

As General Gates was to *receive* an attack, it was thought he ought to chose the ground where to receive it; Arnold, therefore, in company with Kosciuszko, the Polish engineer, reconnoitered the neighborhood in quest of a good camping-ground, and at length fixed upon a ridge of hills called Bemis's Heights, which Kosciuszko proceeded to fortify.

In the meantime Colonel Colburn was sent off with a small party to ascend the high hills on the east side of the Hudson, and watch the movements of the enemy with glasses from their summits, or from the tops of the trees. For three days he kept thus on the look-out,

sending word from time to time to camp of all that he espied.

On the 11th there were the first signs of movement among Burgoyne's troops. On the 13th and 14th, they slowly passed over a bridge of boats, which they had thrown across the Hudson, and encamped near Fish Creek. Colburn counted eight hundred tents, including marquees. A mile in advance were fourteen more tents. The Hessians remained encamped on the eastern side of the river, but intervening woods concealed the number of their tents. There was not the usual stir of military animation in the camps. There were no evening nor morning guns.

On the 15th, both English and Hessian camps struck their tents, and loaded their baggage wagons. By twelve o'clock both began to march. Colburn neglected to notice the route taken by the Hessians; his attention was absorbed by the British, who made their way slowly and laboriously down the western side of the river, along a wretched road intersected by brooks and rivulets, the bridges over which Schuyler had broken down. The division had with it eighty-five baggage wagons and a great train of artillery; with two unwieldy twenty-four pounders, acting like drag-anchors. It was a silent, dogged march,

without beat of drum, or spirit-stirring bray of trumpet. A body of light troops, new levies, and Indians, painted and decorated for war, struck off from the rest and disappeared in the forest, up Fish Creek. From the great silence observed by Burgoyne in his movements, and the care he took in keeping his men together, and allowing no straggling parties, Colonel Colburn apprehended that he meditated an attack. Having seen the enemy advance two miles on its march, therefore, he descended from the heights, and hastened to the American camp to make his report. A British prisoner, brought in soon afterwards, stated that Burgoyne had come to a halt about four miles distant.

On the following morning, the army was under arms at daylight; the enemy, however, remained encamped, repairing bridges in front, and sending down guard boats to reconnoiter; the Americans, therefore, went on to fortify their position. The ridge of hills called Bemis's Heights, rises abruptly from the narrow flats bordering the west side of the river. Kosciuszko had fortified the camp with intrenchments three-quarters of a mile in extent, having redoubts and batteries, which commanded the valley, and even the hills on the opposite side of the river; for the Hudson,

Bemis Heights at the Time of the Revolution.

Redrawn from an old wood-cut.

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in this upper part, is comparatively a narrow stream. From the foot of the heights, an intrenchment extended to the river, ending with a battery at the water edge, commanding a floating bridge.

The right wing of the army, under the immediate command of Gates, and composed of Glover's, Nixon's, and Patterson's brigades, occupied the brow of the hill nearest to the river, with the flats below.

The left wing, commanded by Arnold, was on the side of the camp farthest from the river, and distant from the latter about three-quarters of a mile. It was composed of the New Hampshire brigade of General Poor, Pierre Van Courtlandt's and James Livingston's regiments of New York militia, the Connecticut militia, Morgan's riflemen, and Dearborn's infantry. The centre was composed of Massachusetts and New York troops.

Burgoyne gradually drew nearer to the camp, throwing out large parties of pioneers and workmen. The Americans disputed every step. A Hessian officer observes: "The enemy bristled up his hair, as we attempted to repair more bridges. At last, we had to do him the honor of sending out whole regiments to protect our workmen." *

*Schölzer's *Briefwechsel.*

It was Arnold who provoked this honor. At the head of fifteen hundred men he skirmished bravely with the superior force sent out against him, and retired with several prisoners.

Burgoyne now encamped about two miles from General Gates, disposing his army in two lines; the left on the river, the right extending at right angles to it, about six hundred yards, across the low grounds to a range of steep and rocky hills, occupied by the *élite;* a ravine formed by a rivulet from the hills passed in front of the camp. The low ground between the armies was cultivated; the hills were covered with woods, excepting three or four small openings and deserted farms. Beside the ravines which fronted each camp there was a third one, midway between them, also at right angles to the river.*

On the morning of the 19th, General Gates received intelligence that the enemy were advancing in great force on his left. It was, in fact, their right wing, composed of the British line and led by Burgoyne in person. It was covered by the grenadiers and light infantry under General Fraser and Colonel Breyman, who kept along the high grounds on the right; while they, in turn, were covered in front and on the flanks by Indians, provincial royalists,

* Wilkinson's *Memoirs*, i. 236.

and Canadians. The left wing and artillery were advancing at the same time, under Major-Generals Phillips and Riedesel, along the great road and meadows by the river side, but they were retarded by the necessity of repairing broken bridges. It was the plan of Burgoyne, that the Canadians and Indians should attack the central outposts of the Americans, and draw their attention in that direction, while he and Fraser, making a circuit through the woods, should join forces and fall upon the rear of the American camp. As the dense forests hid them from each other, signal guns were to regulate their movements. Three, fired in succession, were to denote that all was ready, and be the signal for an attack in front, flank, and rear.

The American pickets, stationed along the ravine of Mill Creek, sent repeated accounts to General Gates of the movements of the enemy; but he remained quiet in his camp, as if determined to await an attack. The American officers grew impatient. Arnold especially, impetuous by nature, urged repeatedly that a detachment should be sent forth to check the enemy in their advance and drive the Indians out of the woods. At length he succeeded in getting permission, about noon, to detach Morgan with his riflemen and Dearborn with

his infantry from his division. They soon fell in with the Canadians and Indians, which formed the advance guard of the enemy's right, and attacking them with spirit, drove them in, or rather dispersed them. Morgan's riflemen, following up their advantage with too much eagerness, became likewise scattered, and a strong reinforcement of royalists arriving on the scene of action, the Americans, in their turn, were obliged to give way.

Other detachments now arrived from the American camp, led by Arnold, who attacked Fraser on his right, to check his attempt to get in the rear of the camp. Finding the position of Fraser too strong to be forced, he sent to headquarters for reinforcements, but they were refused by Gates, who declared that no more should go; "he would not suffer his camp to be exposed."* The reason he gave was that it might be attacked by the enemy's left wing.

Arnold now made a rapid counter-march, and, his movement being masked by the woods, suddenly attempted to turn Fraser's left. Here he came in full conflict with the British line, and threw himself upon it with a boldness and impetuosity that for a time threatened to break it, and cut the wings of the army asunder.

* Colonel Varick to Schuyler. Schuyler's *Papers*.

The grenadiers and Breyman's riflemen hastened to its support. General Phillips broke his way through the woods with four pieces of artillery, and Riedesel came on with his heavy dragoons. Reinforcements came likewise to Arnold's assistance; his force, however, never exceeded three thousand men, and with these, for nearly four hours, he kept up a conflict, almost hand to hand, with the whole right wing of the British army. Part of the time the Americans had the advantage of fighting under the cover of a wood, so favorable to their militia and sharpshooters. Burgoyne ordered the woods to be cleared by the bayonet. His troops rushed forward in columns with a hurrah! The Americans kept within their intrenchments, and repeatedly repulsed them; but if they pursued their advantage, and advanced into open field, they were in their turn driven back.

Night alone put an end to the conflict, which the British acknowledged to have been the most obstinate and hardly fought they had ever experienced in America. Both parties claimed the victory. But, though the British remained on the field of battle, where they lay all night upon their arms, they had failed in their object; they had been assailed instead of being the assailants; while the American troops had

accomplished the purpose for which they had sallied forth; had checked the advance of the enemy, frustrated their plan of attack, and returned exulting to their camp. Their loss, in killed and wounded, was between three and four hundred, including several officers; that of the enemy upwards of five hundred.

Burgoyne gives an affecting picture of the situation of the ladies of rank already mentioned, during this action. Lady Harriet had been directed by her husband, Major Ackland, to follow the route of the artillery and baggage, which was not exposed. "At the time the action began," writes Burgoyne, "she found herself near a small uninhabited hut, where she alighted. When it was found the action was becoming general and bloody, the surgeons of the hospital took possession of the same place, as the most convenient for the first care of the wounded. Thus was the lady in hearing of one continual fire of cannon and musketry, for four hours together, with the presumption, from the post of her husband, at the head of the grenadiers, that he was in the most exposed part of the action. She had three female companions, the Baroness of Riedesel, and the wives of two British officers, Major Harnage and Lieutenant Reynell; but in the event their presence served but little for

comfort. Major Harnage was soon brought to the surgeons very badly wounded; and in a little time after came intelligence that Lieutenant Reynell was shot dead. Imagination wants no helps to figure the state of the whole group."

Arnold was excessively indignant at Gates's withholding the reinforcements he had required in the heat of the action; had they been furnished, he said, he might have severed the line of the enemy and gained a complete victory. He was urgent to resume the action on the succeeding morning, and follow up the advantage he had gained, but Gates declined, to his additional annoyance. He attributed the refusal to pique or jealousy, but Gates subsequently gave as a reason the great deficiency of powder and ball in the camp, which was known only to himself, and which he kept secret until a supply was sent from Albany.

Burgoyne now strengthened his position with intrenchments and batteries, part of them across the meadows which bordered the river, part on the brow of the heights which commanded them. The Americans likewise extended and strengthened their line of breastworks on the left of the camp; the right was already unassailable. The camps were within gunshot, but with ravines and woods between them.

Washington's predictions of the effect to be

produced by Morgan's riflemen approached fulfilment. The Indians, dismayed at the severe treatment experienced from these veteran bush fighters, were disappearing from the British camp. The Canadians and royal provincials, "mere trimmers," as Burgoyne called them, were deserting in great numbers, and he had no confidence in those who remained.

His situation was growing more and more critical. On the 21st, he heard shouts in the American camp, and in a little while their cannon thundered a *feu de joie*. News had been received from General Lincoln, that a detachment of New England troops under Colonel Brown had surprised the carrying-place, mills, and French lines at Ticonderoga, captured an armed sloop, gunboats, and bateaux, made three hundred prisoners, beside releasing one hundred American captives, and were laying siege to Fort Independence.*

Fortunately for Burgoyne, while affairs were darkening in the North, a ray of hope dawned from the South. While the shouts from the American camp were yet ringing in his ears, came a letter in a cipher from Sir Henry Clinton, dated the 12th of September, announcing his intention in about ten days to attack the forts in the Highlands of the Hudson.

* Colonel Varick to Schuyler. Schuyler's *Papers*.

Burgoyne sent back the messenger the same night, and despatched, moreover, two officers in disguise, by different routes, all bearing messages informing Sir Henry of his perilous situation, and urging a diversion that might oblige General Gates to detach a part of his army ; adding, that he would endeavor to maintain his present position, and await favorable events until the 12th of October.*

The jealousy of Gates had been intensely excited at finding the whole credit of the late affair given by the army to Arnold : in his despatches to government he made no mention of him. This increased the schism between them. Wilkinson, the adjutant-general, who was a sycophantic adherent of Gates, pandered to his pique by withdrawing from Arnold's division Morgan's rifle corps and Dearborn's light infantry, its arms of strength, which had done such brilliant service in the late affair : they were henceforth to be subject to no order, but those from headquarters.

Arnold called on Gates on the evening of the 22d, to remonstrate. High words passed between them, and matters came to an open rupture. Gates, in his heat, told Arnold that he did not consider him a major-general, he having sent his resignation to Congress ; that

* Burgoyne to Lord George Germaine.

he had never given him the command of any division of the army; that General Lincoln would arrive in a day or two, and then he would have no further occasion for him, and would give him a pass to go to Philadelphia, whenever he chose.*

Arnold returned to his quarters in a rage, and wrote a note to Gates requesting the proffered permit to depart for Philadelphia; by the time he received it his ire had cooled and he had changed his mind. He determined to remain in camp and abide the anticipated battle.

Lincoln, in the meantime, arrived in advance of his troops; which soon followed to the amount of two thousand. Part of the troops, detached by him under Colonel Brown, were besieging Ticonderoga and Fort Independence. Colonel Brown himself, with part of his detachment, had embarked on Lake George in an armed schooner, and a squadron of captured gunboats and bateaux, and was threatening the enemy's deposit of baggage and heavy artillery at Diamond Island. The toils so skilfully spread were encompassing Burgoyne more and more; the gates of Canada were closing behind him.

A morning or two after Lincoln's arrival, Arnold observed him giving some directions in

* Col. Livingston to Schuyler. Schuyler's *Papers*.

the left division, and quickly inquired whether he was doing so by order of General Gates; being answered in the negative, he observed that the left division belonged to him; and that he believed his (Lincoln's) proper station was on the right, and that of General Gates ought to be in the centre. He requested him to mention this to General Gates, and have the matter adjusted.

"He is determined," writes Varick, "not to suffer any one to interfere in his division, and says it will be death to any officer who does so in action." Arnold, in fact, was in a bellicose vein, and rather blustered about the camp. Gates, he said, could not refuse him his command, and he would not yield it now that a battle was expected.

Some of the general officers and colonels of his division proposed to make him an address, thanking him for his past services, particularly in the late action, and entreating him to stay. Others suggested that the general officers should endeavor to produce a reconciliation between the jarring parties. Lincoln was inclined to do so; but, in the end, neither measure was taken through fear of offending General Gates. In the meantime Arnold remained in camp, treated, he said, as a cipher, and never consulted; though when

Congress had sent him to that department, at the request of General Washington, they expected the commander would at least have taken his opinion in public matters.

On the 30th, he gave vent to his feelings in an indignant letter to Gates. "Notwithstanding I have reason to think your treatment proceeds from a spirit of jealousy," writes he, "and that I have everything to fear from the malice of my enemies, conscious of my own innocency and integrity, I am determined to sacrifice my feelings, present peace, and quiet, to the public good, and continue in the army at this critical juncture, when my country needs every support.

"I hope," concludes he, "you will not impute this hint to a wish to command the army, or to outshine you, when I assure you it proceeds from my zeal for the cause of my country, in which I expect to rise or fall." *

All this time the Americans were harassing the British camp with frequent night alarms and attacks on its pickets and outposts.

"From the 20th of September to the 7th of October," writes Burgoyne, "the armies were so near, that not a night passed without firing, and sometimes concerted attacks upon our advanced pickets. I do not believe either officer

* Gates's *Papers*, N. Y. Hist. Lib.

or soldier ever slept in that interval without his clothes ; or that any general officer or commander of a regiment passed a single night, without being upon his legs occasionally at different hours, and constantly an hour before daylight." *

Still Burgoyne kept up a resolute mien, telling his soldiers, in a harangue, that he was determined to leave his bones on the field, or force his way to Albany. He yet clung to the hope, that Sir Henry Clinton might operate in time to relieve him from his perilous position.

We will now cast a look toward New York, and ascertain the cause of Sir Henry's delay in his anxiously expected operations on the Hudson.

* *Burgoyne's Expedition*, p. 166.

Chapter XXIV.

Preparations of Sir Henry Clinton—State of the Highland Defenses—Putnam Alarmed—Advance of the Armament up the Hudson—Plan of Sir Henry Clinton — Peekskill Threatened — Putnam Deceived—Secret March of the Enemy through the Mountains —Forts Montgomery and Clinton Overpowered—Narrow Escape of the Commanders—Conflagration and Explosion of the American Frigates—Rallying Efforts of Putnam and Governor Clinton—The Spy and the Silver Bullet — Esopus Burnt — Ravaging Progress of the Enemy up the Hudson.

THE expedition of Sir Henry Clinton had awaited the arrival of reinforcements from Europe, which were slowly crossing the ocean in Dutch bottoms. At length they arrived, after a three months' voyage, and now there was a stir of warlike preparation at New York ; the streets were full of soldiery, the bay full of ships, and water craft of all kinds were plying about the harbor. Between three and four thousand men were to

be embarked on board of ships of war, armed galleys, and flat-bottomed boats. A southern destination was given out, but shrewd observers surmised the real one.

The defenses of the Highlands, on which the security of the Hudson depended, were at this time weakly garrisoned; some of the troops having been sent off to reinforce the armies on the Delaware and in the North. Putnam, who had the general command of the Highlands, had but eleven hundred continental and four hundred militia troops with him at Peekskill, his headquarters. There was a feeble garrison at Fort Independence, in the vicinity of Peekskill, to guard the public stores and workshops at Continental Village.

The Highland forts, Clinton, Montgomery, and Constitution, situated among the mountains and forming their main defense, were no better garrisoned, and George Clinton, who had the command of them, and who was in a manner the champion of the Highlands, was absent from his post, attending the State Legislature at Kingston (Esopus), in Ulster County, in his capacity of governor.

There were patriot eyes in New York to watch the course of events, and patriot boats on the river to act as swift messengers. On the 29th of September, Putnam wrote to his

coadjutor the governor: "I have received intelligence on which I can fully depend, that the enemy had received a reinforcement at New York last Thursday, of about three thousand British and foreign troops; that General Clinton has called in guides who belong about Croton River; has ordered hard bread to be baked; that the troops are called from Paulus Hook to King's Bridge, and the whole troops are now under marching orders. I think it highly probable the designs of the enemy are against the posts of the Highlands, or of some part of the counties of Westchester or Dutchess." Under these circumstances he begged a reinforcement of the militia to enable him to maintain his post, and intimated a wish for the personal assistance and counsel of the governor. In a postscript he adds: "The ships are drawn up in the river, and I believe nothing prevents them from paying us an immediate visit, but a contrary wind."

On receiving this letter the governor forthwith hastened to his post in the Highlands, with such militia force as he could collect. We have heretofore spoken of his Highland citadel, Fort Montgomery, and of the obstructions of chain, boom, and chevaux-de-frise between it and the opposite promontory of Anthony's Nose, with which it had been hoped to barri-

cade the Hudson. The chain had repeatedly given way under the pressure of the tide, but the obstructions were still considered efficient, and were protected by the guns of the fort, and of two frigates and two armed galleys anchored above.

Fort Clinton had subsequently been erected within rifle shot of Fort Montgomery, to occupy ground which commanded it. A deep ravine and stream called Peploeps Kill, intervened between the two forts, across which there was a bridge. The governor had his headquarters in Fort Montgomery, which was the northern and largest fort, but its works were unfinished. His brother James had charge of Fort Clinton, which was complete. The whole force to garrison the associate forts did not exceed six hundred men, chiefly militia, but they had the veteran Colonel Lamb of the artillery with them, who had served in Canada, and a company of his artillerists was distributed in the two forts.

The armament of Sir Henry Clinton, which had been waiting for a wind, set sail in the course of a day or two and stood up the Hudson, dogged by American swift-rowing whaleboats. Late at night on the 4th of October came a barge across the river, from Peekskill to Fort Montgomery, bearing a letter from

Putnam to the governor. "This morning," writes he, "we had information from our guard boats, that there were two ships of war, three tenders, and a large number of flat-bottomed boats, coming up the river. They proceeded up as far as Tarrytown, where they landed their men. This evening they were followed by one large man-of-war, five topsail vessels, and a large number of small craft. I have sent off parties to examine their route and harass their march, if prudent. By information from several different quarters, we have reason to believe they intend for this post. They are now making up, as we hear, for the Croton Bridge." *

The landing of the troops at Tarrytown was a mere feint on the part of Sir Henry to distract the attention of the Americans; after marching a few miles into the country, they returned and re-embarked; the armament continued across the Tappan Sea and Haverstraw Bay to Verplanck's Point, where, on the 15th, Sir Henry landed with three thousand men about eight miles below Peekskill.

Putnam drew back to the hills in the rear of the village, to prepare for the expected attack, and sent off to Governor Clinton for all the troops he could spare. So far the manœuvres

* *Correspondence of the Revolution.* Sparks, ii., 537.

of Sir Henry Clinton had been successful. It was his plan to threaten an attack on Peekskill and Fort Independence, and, when he had drawn the attention of the American commanders to that quarter, to land troops on the western shore of the Hudson, below the Dunderberg (Thunder Hill), make a rapid march through the defiles behind that mountain to the rear of Forts Montgomery and Clinton, come down on them by surprise, and carry them by a *coup de main*.

Accordingly at an early hour of the following morning, taking advantage of a thick fog, he crossed with two thousand men to Stony Point, on the west shore of the river, leaving about a thousand men, chiefly royalists, at Verplanck's Point, to keep up a threatening aspect towards Peekskill. Three frigates, also, were to stand up what is called the Devil's Horse Race into Peekskill Bay, and station themselves within cannon-shot of Fort Independence.

The crossing of the troops had been dimly descried from Peekskill, but they were supposed to be a mere detachment from the main body on a maraud.

Having accomplished his landing, Sir Henry, conducted by a tory guide, set out on a forced and circuitous march of several miles by rugged defiles, round the western base of the

Dunderberg. At the entrance of the pass he left a small force to guard it, and keep up his communication with the ships. By eight o'clock in the morning he had effected his march round the Dunderberg, and halted on the northern side in a ravine, between it and a conical mount called Bear Hill. The possibility of an enemy's approach by this pass had been noticed by Washington in reconnoitering the Highlands, and he had mentioned it in his instructions to Generals Greene and Knox, when they were sent to make their military survey, but they considered it impracticable, from the extreme difficulty of the mountain passes. It is in defiance of difficulties, however, that surprises are apt to be attempted, and the most signal have been achieved in the face of seeming impossibilities.

In the ravine between the Dunderberg and Bear Hill, Sir Henry divided his forces. One division, nine hundred strong, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, was to make a circuit through the forest round the western side of Bear Hill, so as to gain the rear of Fort Montgomery. After Sir Henry had allowed sufficient time for them to make the circuit, he was to proceed with the other division down the ravine, towards the river, turn to the left along a narrow strip of land between the Hudson and a small

lake called Sinipink Pond, which lay at the foot of Bear Hill, and advance upon Fort Clinton. Both forts were to be attacked at the same time.

The detachment under Campbell set off in high spirits; it was composed partly of royalists, led by Colonel Beverley Robinson of New York, partly of Emerick's chasseurs, and partly of grenadiers, under Lord Rawdon, then about twenty-four years of age, who had already seen service at Bunker's Hill. With him went Count Gabrouski, a Polish nobleman, aide-de-camp to Sir Henry Clinton, but who had sought to accompany his friend, Lord Rawdon, in this wild mountain scramble. Everything thus far had been conducted with celerity and apparent secrecy, and complete surprise of both forts was anticipated. Sir Henry had indeed outwitted one of the guardians of the Highlands, but the other was aware of his designs. Governor Clinton, on receiving intelligence of ships of war coming up the Hudson, had sent scouts beyond the Dunderberg to watch their movements. Early on the present morning, word had been brought him that forty boats were landing a large force at Stony Point. He now, in his turn, apprehended an attack, and sent to Putnam for reinforcements, preparing in the meantime, to make such defense as his scanty means afforded.

A lieutenant was sent out with thirty men from Fort Clinton, to proceed along the river-road and reconnoiter. He fell in with the advance guard of Sir Henry Clinton's division, and retreated skirmishing to the fort. A larger detachment was sent out to check the approach of the enemy on this side; while sixty men, afterwards increased to a hundred, took post with a brass field-piece in the Bear Hill defile.

It was a narrow and rugged pass, bordered by shagged forests. As Campbell and his division came pressing forward, they were checked by the discharge of fire-arms and of the brass field-piece, which swept the steep defile. The British troops then filed off on each side into the woods, to surround the Americans. The latter, finding it impossible to extricate their field-piece in the rugged pass, spiked it, and retreated into the fort, under cover of the fire of a twelve-pounder, with which Lamb had posted himself on the crest of a hill.

Sir Henry Clinton had met with equally obstinate opposition in his approach to Fort Clinton; the narrow strip of land between Lake Sinipink and the Hudson, along which he advanced, being fortified by an abatis. By four o'clock the Americans were driven within their works, and both forts were assailed. The defense was desperate: for Governor Clinton

was a hard fighter, and he was still in hopes of reinforcements from Putnam ; not knowing that the messenger he sent to him had turned traitor and deserted to the enemy.

About five o'clock, he was summoned to surrender in five minutes, to prevent the effusion of blood : the reply was a refusal. About ten minutes afterwards, there was a general attack upon both forts. It was resisted with obstinate spirit. The action continued until dusk. The ships under Commodore Hotham approached near enough to open an irregular fire upon the forts, and upon the vessels anchored above the chevaux-de-frise. The latter returned the fire ; and the flash and roar of their cannonry in the gathering darkness and among the echoes of the mountains increased the terrors of the strife. The works, however, were too extensive to be manned by the scanty garrisons ; they were entered by different places and carried at the point of the bayonet ; the Americans fought desperately from one redoubt to another ; some were slain, some taken prisoners, and some escaped under cover of the night to the river or the mountains. "The garrison," writes Clinton, significantly, "had to fight their way out as many as could, as we determined not to surrender."

His brother James was saved from a deadly

thrust of a bayonet, by a garrison orderly-book in his pocket; but he received a flesh-wound in the thigh. He slid down a precipice, one hundred feet high, into the ravine between the forts, and escaped to the woods. The governor leaped down the rocks to the river side, where a boat was putting off with a number of the fugitives. They turned back to receive him, but he generously refused to endanger their safety, as the boat was already loaded to the gunwale. It was only on receiving assurance of its being capable of bearing his additional weight, that he consented to enter. The boat crossed the Hudson in safety, and before midnight the governor was with Putnam, at Continental Village, concerting further measures.

Putnam had been completely outmanœuvred by Sir Henry Clinton. He had continued until late in the morning, in the belief that Peekskill and Fort Independence were to be the objects of attack. His pickets and scouts could not ascertain the number of the enemy remaining on the east side of the river; a large fire near Stony Point made him think the troops which had crossed were merely burning storehouses; while ships, galleys, and flat-bottomed boats seemed preparing to land forces at Fort Independence and Peekskill. In the course of the morning he sallied forth with Brigadier-

General Parsons, to reconnoiter the ground near the enemy. After their return they were alarmed, he says, by "a very heavy and hot firing both of small arms and cannon, at Fort Montgomery," which must have made a tremendous uproar among the echoes of the Dunderberg. Aware of the real point of danger, he immediately detached five hundred men to reinforce the garrison. They had six miles to march along the eastern shore, and then to cross the river; before they could do so the fate of the forts was decided.

British historians acknowledged that the valor and resolution displayed by the Americans in the defense of these forts were in no instance exceeded during the war; their loss in killed, wounded and missing, was stated at two hundred and fifty, a large proportion of the number engaged. Their gallant defense awakened no generous sentiment in the victors. "As the soldiers," observes the British writer, "were much irritated, as well by the fatigue they had undergone and the opposition they met, as by the loss of some brave and favorite officers, the slaughter of the enemy was considerable."*

Among the officers thus deplored, and bloodily revenged, was Colonel Campbell, who com-

* *Civil War in America*, vol. i., p. 311.

manded the detachment. At his fall the command devolved on Colonel Beverly Robinson of the American loyalists. Another officer slain was Major Grant of the New York volunteers. Count Gabrouski, the Polish aide-de-camp of Sir Henry Clinton, had gallantly signalized himself by the side of his friend, Lord Rawdon, who led the grenadiers in storming Fort Montgomery. The count received his death wound at the foot of the ramparts. Giving his sword to a grenadier, "Take this sword to Lord Rawdon," said he, "and tell him the owner died like a soldier." *

On the capture of the forts, the American frigates and galleys stationed for the protection of the chevaux-de-frise slipped their cables, made all sail, and endeavored to escape up the river. The wind, however, proved adverse; there was danger of their falling into the hands of the enemy; the crews, therefore, set them on fire and abandoned them. As every sail was set, the vessels, we are told, were soon "magnificent pyramids of fire"; the surrounding mountains were lit up by the glare, and a train of ruddy light gleamed along the river. They were in a part of the Highlands famous for its echoes: as the flames gradually reached the loaded cannon, their thundering reports

* Steadman, vol. i., p. 364.

were multiplied and prolonged along the rocky shores. The vessels at length blew up with tremendous explosions, and all again was darkness." *

On the following morning, the chevaux-de-frise and other obstructions between Fort Montgomery and Anthony's Nose were cleared away : the Americans evacuated Forts Independence and Constitution, and a free passage up the Hudson was open for the British ships. Sir Henry Clinton proceeded no farther in person, but left the rest of the enterprise to be accomplished by Sir James Wallace and General Vaughan, with a flying squadron of light frigates, and a considerable detachment of troops.

Putnam had retreated to a pass in the mountains, on the east side of the river, near Fishkill, having removed as much of the stores and baggage as possible from the post he had abandoned. The old general was somewhat mortified at having been outwitted by the enemy, but endeavored to shift the responsibility. In a letter to Washington (October 8th), he writes : "I have repeatedly informed your Excellency of the enemy's design against this post ; but, from some motive or other you always differed from me in opinion. As this conjecture of mine has for once proved right, I cannot omit inform-

* Steadman, vol. i., p. 364.

ing you, that my real and sincere opinion is, that they now mean to join General Burgoyne with the utmost despatch. Governor Clinton is exerting himself in collecting the militia of this State. Brigadier-General Parsons I have sent off to forward in the Connecticut militia, which are now arriving in great numbers. I therefore hope and trust, that in the course of a few days I shall be able to oppose the progress of the enemy."

He had concerted with Governor Clinton that they should move to the northward with their forces, along the opposite shores of the Hudson, endeavoring to keep pace with the enemy's ships and cover the country from their attacks.

The governor was in the neighborhood of New Windsor, just above the Highlands, where he had posted himself to rally what he termed his "broken but brave troops," and to call out the militia of Ulster and Orange. "I am persuaded," writes he, "if the militia will join me, we can save the country from destruction, and defeat the enemy's design of assisting their Northern army." The militia, however, were not as prompt as usual in answering to the call of their popular and brave-hearted governor. "They are well disposed," writes he, "but anxious about the immediate safety of their respective families (who, for

many miles, are yet moving farther from the river); they come in the morning and return in the evening, and I never know when I have them, or what my strength is." *

On the 9th, two persons coming from Fort Montgomery were arrested by his guards, and brought before him for examination. One was much agitated, and was observed to put something hastily into his mouth and swallow it. An emetic was administered, and brought up a small silver bullet. Before he could be prevented he swallowed it again. On his refusing a second emetic, the governor threatened to have him hanged and his body opened. The threat produced the bullet in the preceding manner. It was oval in form and hollow, with a screw in the centre, and contained a note from Sir Henry Clinton to Burgoyne, written on a slip of thin paper, and dated (October 8th) from Fort Montgomery. "*Nous y voici* [here we are], and nothing between us and Gates. I sincerely hope this little success of ours will facilitate your operations." †

The bearer of the letter was tried and convicted as a spy, and sentenced to be hanged.

* Letter to the Council of Safety. *Journal of Provincial Congress*, vol. i., 1064.

† Governor Clinton to the N. Y. Council of Safety. *Journal of Provincial Congress.*

The enemy's light-armed vessels were now making their way up the river; landing marauding parties occasionally to make depredations.

As soon as the governor could collect a little force, he pressed forward to protect Kingston (Esopus), the seat of the State legislature. The enemy in the meantime landed from their ships, routed about one hundred and fifty militia collected to oppose them, marched to the village, set fire to it in every part, consuming great quantities of stores collected there, and then retreated to their ships.

Governor Clinton was two hours too late. He beheld the flames from a distance; and having brought with him the spy, the bearer of the silver bullet, he hanged him on an apple-tree in sight of the burning village.

Having laid Kingston, the seat of the State government, in ashes, the enemy proceeded in their ravages, destroying the residences of conspicuous patriots at Rhinebeck, Livingston Manor, and elsewhere, and among others the mansion of the widow of the brave General Montgomery; trusting to close their desolating career by a triumphant junction with Burgoyne at Albany.

House at Kingston, New York, in which the Constitution of the State was Drawn up.

Redrawn from Barber's "Historical Collection."

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Chapter XXV.

Scarcity in the British Camp—Gates Bides his Time—Foraging Movement of Burgoyne—Battle of the 7th October—Rout of the British and Hessians—Situation of the Baroness Riedesel and Lady Harriet Ackland during the Battle—Death of Gen. Fraser—His Funeral—Night Retreat of the British—Expedition of Lady Harriet Ackland—Desperate Situation of Burgoyne at Saratoga—Capitulation—Surrender—Conduct of the American Troops—Scenes in the Camp—Gallant Courtesy of Schuyler to the Baroness Riedesel—His Magnanimous Conduct toward Burgoyne—Return of the British down the Hudson.

WHILE Sir Henry Clinton had been thundering in the Highlands, Burgoyne and his army had been wearing out hope within their intrenchments, vigilantly watched, but unassailed by the Americans. They became impatient even of this impunity. "The enemy, though he can bring four times more

soldiers against us, shows no desire to make an attack," writes a Hessian officer.*

Arnold, too, was chafing in the camp, and longing for a chance, as usual, "to right himself" by his sword. In a letter to Gates he tries to goad him on. "I think it my duty (which nothing shall deter me from doing) to acquaint you, the army are clamorous for action. The militia (who compose great part of the army) are already threatening to go home. One fortnight's inaction will, I make no doubt, lessen your army by sickness and desertion, at least four thousand men. In which time the enemy may be reinforced, and make good their retreat.

"I have reason to think, from intelligence since received, that, had we improved the 20th of September, it might have ruined the enemy. That is past; let me entreat you to improve the present time."

Gates was not to be goaded into action; he saw the desperate situation of Burgoyne, and bided his time. "Perhaps," writes he, "despair may dictate to him to risk all upon one throw; he is an old gamester, and in his time has seen all chances. I will endeavor to be ready to prevent his good fortune, and, if possible, secure my own." †

* Schlözer's *Briefwechsel.*

† Letter to Gov. Clinton. Gates's *Papers.*

On the 7th of October, but four or five days remained of the time Burgoyne had pledged himself to await the co-operation of Sir Henry Clinton. He now determined to make a grand movement on the left of the American camp, to discover whether he could force a passage, should it be necessary to advance, or dislodge it from its position, should it have to retreat. Another object was to cover a forage of the army, which was suffering from the great scarcity.

For this purpose fifteen hundred of his best troops, with two twelve-pounders, two howitzers and six six-pounders, were to be led by himself, seconded by Major-Generals Phillips and Riedesel, and Brigadier-General Fraser. "No equal number of men," say the British accounts, "were ever better commanded; and it would have been difficult indeed, to have matched the men with an equal number." *

On leaving his camp, Burgoyne committed the guard of it on the high grounds to Brigadier-Generals Hamilton and Specht, and of the redoubts on the low grounds near the river, to Brigadier-General Gall.

Forming his troops within three-quarters of a mile of the left of the Americans, though covered from their sight by the forest, he sent

* *Civil War in America*, i., 302.

out a corps of rangers, provincials, and Indians, to skulk through the woods, get in their rear, and give them an alarm at the time the attack took place in front.

The movement, though carried on behind the screen of forests, was discovered. In the afternoon the advanced guard of the American centre beat to arms; the alarm was repeated throughout the line. Gates ordered his officers to their alarm posts, and sent forth Wilkinson, the adjutant-general, to inquire the cause. From a rising ground in an open place he descried the enemy in force, their foragers busy in a field of wheat, the officers reconnoitering the left wing of the camp with telescopes from the top of a cabin.

Returning to the camp, Wilkinson reported the position and movements of the enemy; that their front was open, their flanks rested on woods, under cover of which they might be attacked, and their right was skirted by a height: that they were reconnoitering the left, and he thought offered battle.

"Well, then," replied Gates, "order out Morgan to begin the game."

A plan of attack was soon arranged. Morgan with his riflemen and a body of infantry was sent to make a circuit through the woods, and get possession of the heights on the right

of the enemy, while General Poor with his brigade of New York and New Hampshire troops, and a part of Learned's brigade, were to advance against the enemy's left. Morgan was to make an attack on the heights as soon as he should hear the fire opened below.

Burgoyne now drew out his troops in battle array. The grenadiers under Major Ackland, with the artillery, under Major Williams, formed the left, and were stationed on a rising ground, with a rivulet called Mill Creek in front. Next to them were the Hessians, under Riedesel, and British, under Phillips, forming the centre. The light infantry, under Lord Balcarras, formed the extreme right; having in the advance a detachment of five hundred picked men, under General Fraser, ready to flank the Americans as soon as they should be attacked in front.

He had scarce made these arrangements, when he was astonished and confounded by a thundering of artillery on his left, and a rattling fire of rifles on the woody heights on his right. The troops under Poor advanced steadily up the ascent where Ackland's grenadiers and Williams's artillery were stationed; received their fire, and then rushed forward. Ackland's grenadiers received the first brunt, but it extended along the line, as detachment

after detachment arrived, and was carried on with inconceivable fury. The Hessian artillerists spoke afterwards of the heedlessness with which the Americans rushed upon the cannon, while they were discharging grapeshot. The artillery was repeatedly taken and retaken, and at length remained in possession of the Americans, who turned it upon its former owners. Major Ackland was wounded in both legs, and taken prisoner. Major Williams of the artillery was also captured. The headlong impetuosity of the attack confounded the regular tacticians. Much of this has been ascribed to the presence and example of Arnold. That daring officer, who had lingered in the camp in expectation of a fight, was exasperated at having no command assigned him. On hearing the din of battle, he could restrain no longer his warlike impulse, but threw himself on his horse and sallied forth. Gates saw him issuing from the camp. "He 'll do some rash thing!" cried he, and sent his aide-de-camp, Major Armstrong, to call him back. Arnold surmised his errand and evaded it. Putting spurs to his horse, he dashed into the scene of action, and was received with acclamation. Being the superior officer in the field his orders were obeyed of course. Putting himself at the head of the troops of Learned's brigade,

he attacked the Hessians in the enemy's centre, and broke them with repeated charges. Indeed, for a time his actions seemed to partake of frenzy; riding hither and thither, brandishing his sword, and cheering on the men to acts of desperation. In one of his paroxysms of excitement, he struck and wounded an American officer on the head with his sword, without, as he afterwards declared, being conscious of the act. Wilkinson asserts that he was partly intoxicated; but Arnold needed only his own irritated pride and the smell of gunpowder to rouse him to acts of madness.

Morgan, in the meantime, was harassing the enemy's right wing with an incessant fire of small-arms, and preventing it from sending any assistance to the centre. General Fraser with his chosen corps, for some time rendered great protection to this wing. Mounted on an iron-gray charger, his uniform of a field-officer made him a conspicuous object for Morgan's sharpshooters. One bullet cut the crupper of his horse, another grazed his mane. "You are singled out, general," said his aide-de-camp, "and had better shift your ground." "My duty forbids me to fly from danger," was the reply. A moment afterwards he was shot down by a marksman posted in a tree. Two grenadiers bore him to the camp. His fall

was a death-blow to his corps. The arrival on the field of a large reinforcement of New York troops under General Ten Broeck, completed the confusion. Burgoyne saw that the field was lost, and now only thought of saving his camp. The troops nearest to the lines were ordered to throw themselves within them, while Generals Phillips and Riedesel covered the retreat of the main body, which was in danger of being cut off. The artillery was abandoned, all the horses, and most of the men who had so bravely defended it, having been killed. The troops, though hard pressed retired in good order. Scarcely had they entered the camp when it was stormed with great fury; the Americans, with Arnold at their head, rushing to the lines under a severe discharge of grape-shot and small-arms. Lord Balcarras defended the intrenchments bravely; the action was fierce, and well sustained on either side. After an ineffectual attempt to make his way into the camp in this quarter at the point of the bayonet, Arnold spurred his horse toward the right flank of the camp occupied by the German reserve, where Lieutenant-Colonel Brooks was making a general attack with a Massachusetts regiment. Here, with a part of a platoon, he forced his way into a sally-port, but a shot from the retreating Hes-

sians killed his horse, and wounded him in the same leg which had received a wound before Quebec. He was borne off from the field, but not until the victory was complete; for the Germans retreated from the works, leaving on the field their brave defender, Lieutenant-Colonel Breyman, mortally wounded.

The night was now closing in. The victory of the Americans was decisive. They had routed the enemy, killed and wounded a great number, made many prisoners, taken their field-artillery, and gained possession of a part of their works which laid open the right and the rear of their camp. They lay all night on their arms, within half a mile of the scene of action, prepared to renew the assault upon the camp in the morning. Affecting scenes had occurred in the enemy's camp during this deadly conflict.

In the morning previous to the battle, the Baroness De Riedesel had breakfasted with her husband in the camp. Generals Burgoyne, Phillips, and Fraser were to dine with her husband and herself, in a house in the neighborhood where she and her children were quartered. She observed much movement in the camp, but was quieted by the assurance that it was to be a mere reconnoissance. On her way home she met a number of Indians,

painted and decorated and armed with guns, and shouting War! War! Her fears were awakened, and scarce had she reached home when she heard the rattling of fire-arms and the thundering of artillery. The din increased, and soon became so terrible that she "was more dead than alive." About one o'clock came one of the generals who were to have dined with her—poor General Fraser—brought upon a handbarrow, mortally wounded. "The table," writes she, "which was already prepared for dinner, was immediately removed, and a bed placed in its stead for the general. I sat terrified and trembling in a corner. The noise grew more alarming, and I was in a continual agony and tremor, while thinking that my husband might soon, also, be brought in, wounded like General Fraser. That poor general said to the surgeon, 'Tell me the truth, is there no hope?'—There was none. Prayers were read, after which he desired that General Burgoyne should be requested to have him buried on the next day at six o'clock in the evening, on a hill where a breastwork had been constructed."

Lady Harriet Ackland was in a tent near by. News came to her that her husband was mortally wounded and taken prisoner. She was in an agony of distress. The baroness endeavored

to persuade her that his wound might not be dangerous, and advised her to ask permission to join him. She divided the night between soothing attentions to Lady Harriet, and watchful care of her children who were asleep, but who she feared might disturb the poor dying general. Towards morning, thinking his agony approaching, she wrapped them in blankets and retired with them into the entrance hall. Courteous even in death, the general sent her several messages to beg her pardon for the trouble he thought he was giving her. At eight o'clock in the morning he expired.*

Burgoyne had shifted his position during the night, to heights about a mile to the north, close to the river, and covered in front by a ravine. Early in the morning, the Americans took possession of the camp which he had abandoned. A random fire of artillery and small-arms was kept up on both sides during the day. The British sharpshooters stationed in the ravine did some execution, and General Lincoln was wounded in the leg while reconnoitering. Gates, however, did not think it advisable to force a desperate enemy when in a strong position, at the expense of a prodigal waste of blood. He took all measures to cut

*Riedesel's *Memoirs*.

off his retreat and insure a surrender. General Fellows, with 1,400 men, had already been sent to occupy the high ground east of the Hudson opposite Saratoga Ford. Other detachments were sent higher up the river in the direction of Lake George.

Burgoyne saw that nothing was left for him but a prompt and rapid retreat to Saratoga, yet in this he was delayed by a melancholy duty of friendship; it was to attend the obsequies of the gallant Fraser, who, according to his dying request, was to be interred at six o'clock in the evening, within a redoubt which had been constructed on a hill.

Between sunset and dark, his body was borne to the appointed place by grenadiers of his division, followed by the generals and their staffs. The Americans seeing indistinctly what, in the twilight, appeared to be a movement of troops up the hill and in the redoubt, pointed their artillery in that direction. "Cannon balls flew around and above the assembled mourners," writes the Baroness Riedesel, who was a spectator from a distance. "Many cannon balls flew close by me, but my whole attention was engaged by the funeral scene, where I saw my husband exposed to imminent danger. This, indeed, was not a moment to be apprehensive for my own safety. General

Gates protested afterwards, that had he known what was going on, he would have stopped the firing immediately."*

We have the scene still more feelingly described by Burgoyne.

"The incessant cannonade during the ceremony; the steady attitude and unaltered voice with which the chaplain officiated, though frequently covered with dust which the shot threw up on all sides of him; the mute, but expressive mixture of sensibility and indignation upon every countenance; these objects will remain to the last of life upon the mind of every man who was present. The growing darkness added to the scenery, and the whole marked a character of that juncture which would make one of the finest subjects for the pencil of a master that the field ever exhibited. To the canvas and to the faithful page of a more important historian, gallant friend! I consign thy memory. There may thy talents, thy manly virtues, their progress and their period, find due distinction: and long may they survive, long after the frail record of my pen shall be forgotten!"

General Fraser was well worthy of this eulogium. He was the most popular officer of the army, and one of the most efficient. He was

* Riedesel's *Memoirs*, p. 171.

one in whom Burgoyne reposed the most implicit confidence, and deeply must it have added to his gloom of mind at this dark hour of his fortunes, to have this his friend and counsellor and brother in arms shot down at his side.

"The reflections arising from these scenes," writes he, "gave place to the perplexities of the night. A defeated army was to retreat from an enemy flushed with success, much superior in front, and occupying strong posts in the country behind. We were equally liable upon that march to be attacked in front, flank, or rear."

Preparations had been made to decamp immediately after the funeral, and at nine o'clock at night the retreat commenced. Large fires had been lighted, and many tents were left standing to conceal the movement. The hospital, in which were about three hundred sick and wounded, was abandoned, as were likewise several bateaux, laden with baggage and provisions.

It was a dismal retreat. The rain fell in torrents; the roads were deep and broken, and the horses weak and half-starved from want of forage. At daybreak there was a halt to refresh the troops, and give time for the bateaux laden with provisions to come abreast. In three

hours the march was resumed, but before long there was another halt, to guard against an American reconnoitering party which appeared in sight. When the troops were again about to march, General Burgoyne received a message from Lady Harriet Ackland, expressing a wish to pass to the American camp, and ask permission from General Gates to join her husband. "Though I was ready to believe," writes Burgoyne, "(for I had experience), that patience and fortitude, in a supreme degree, were to be found, as well as every other virtue, under the most tender forms, I was astonished at this proposal. After so long an agitation of spirits, exhausted not only for want of rest, but absolutely want of food, drenched in rain for twelve hours together, that a woman should be capable of such an undertaking as delivering herself to the enemy, probably in the night, and uncertain of what hands she might first fall into, appeared an effort above human nature. The assistance I was enabled to give her was small indeed; I had not even a cup of wine to offer her; but I was told she had found from some kind and fortunate hand, a little rum and dirty water. All I could furnish her was an open boat, and a few lines written upon dirty wet paper, to General Gates, recommending her to his protection.

"Mr. Brudenell, the chaplain of the artillery (the same gentleman who had officiated so signally at General Fraser's funeral), readily undertook to accompany her, and with one female servant, and the major's valet-de-chambre (who had a ball which he had received in the late action then in his shoulder) she rowed down the river to meet the enemy."

The night was far advanced before the boat reached the American outposts. It was challenged by a sentinel who threatened to fire into it should it attempt to pass. Mr. Brudenell made known that it was a flag of truce, and stated who was the personage it brought; report was made to the adjutant-general. Treachery was apprehended, and word was returned to detain the flag until daylight. Lady Harriet and her companions were allowed to land. Major Dearborn, the officer on guard, surrendered his chamber in the guard-house to her ladyship; bedding was brought, a fire was made, tea was served, and her mind being relieved by assurances of her husband's safety, she was enabled to pass a night of comparative comfort and tranquillity.* She proceeded to the American camp in the morning, when, Bur-

* The statement here given is founded on the report made to General Wilkinson by Major (afterward General) Dearborn. It varies from that of Burgoyne.

goyne acknowledges, "she was received and accommodated by General Gates, with all the humanity and respect that her rank, her merits, and her fortune deserved."

To resume the fortunes of the retreating army. It rained terribly through the residue of the 9th, and in consequence of repeated halts, they did not reach Saratoga until evening. A detachment of Americans had arrived there before them, and were throwing up intrenchments on a commanding height at Fish Kill. They abandoned their work, forded the Hudson, and joined a force under General Fellows, posted on the hills east of the river. The bridge over the Fish Kill had been destroyed; the artillery could not cross until the ford was examined. Exhausted by fatigue, the men for the most part had not strength nor inclination to cut wood nor make fire, but threw themselves upon the wet ground in their wet clothes, and slept under the continuing rain. "I was quite wet," writes the Baroness Riedesel, "and was obliged to remain in that condition for want of a place to change my apparel. I seated myself near a fire and undressed the children, and we then laid ourselves upon some straw."

At daylight on the 10th, the artillery and the last of the troops passed the fords of the Fish

Kill, and took a position upon the heights, and in the redoubts formerly constructed there. To protect the troops from being attacked in passing the ford by the Americans who were approaching, Burgoyne ordered fire to be set to the farmhouses and other buildings on the south side of the Fish Kill. Amongst the rest, the noble mansion of General Schuyler, with storehouses, granaries, mills, and the other appurtenances of a great rural establishment, was entirely consumed. Burgoyne himself estimated the value of property destroyed at ten thousand pounds sterling. The measure was condemned by friend as well as foe, but he justified it on the principles of self-preservation.

The force under General Fellows, posted on the opposite hills of the Hudson, now opened a fire from a battery commanding the ford of that river. Thus prevented from crossing, Burgoyne thought to retreat along the west side as far as Fort George, on the way to Canada, and sent out workmen under a strong escort to repair the bridges, and open the road toward Fort Edward. The escort was soon recalled and the work abandoned; for the Americans under Gates appeared in great force, on the heights south of the Fish Kill, and seemed preparing to cross and bring on an engagement.

The opposite shores of the Hudson were now lined with detachments of Americans. Bateaux laden with provisions, which had attended the movements of the army, were fired upon, many taken, some retaken with loss of life. It was necessary to land the provisions from such as remained, and bring them up the hill into the camp, which was done under a heavy fire from the American artillery.

Burgoyne called now a general council of war, in which it was resolved, since the bridges could not be repaired, to abandon the artillery and baggage, let the troops carry a supply of provisions upon their backs, push forward in the night, and force their way across the fords at or near Fort Edward.

Before the plan could be put in execution, scouts brought word that the Americans were intrenched opposite those fords, and encamped in force with cannon, on the high ground between Fort Edward and Fort George. In fact, by this time the American army, augmented by militia and volunteers from all quarters, had posted itself in strong positions on both sides of the Hudson, so as to extend three-fourths of a circle round the enemy.

Giving up all further attempt at retreat, Burgoyne now fortified his camp on the heights to the north of Fish Kill, still hoping that succor

might arrive from Sir Henry Clinton, or that an attack upon his trenches might give him some chance of cutting his way through.

In this situation his troops lay continually on their arms. His camp was subjected to cannonading from Fellows's batteries on the opposite side of the Hudson, Gates's batteries on the south of Fish Kill, and a galling fire from Morgan's riflemen, stationed on heights in the rear.

The Baroness De Riedesel and her helpless little ones were exposed to the dangers and horrors of this long turmoil. On the morning when the attack was opened, General De Riedesel sent them to take refuge in a house in the vicinity. On their way thither the baroness saw several men on the opposite bank of the Hudson, levelling their muskets and about to fire. Throwing her children in the back part of the carriage the anxious mother endeavored to cover them with her body. The men fired ; a poor wounded soldier, who had sought shelter behind the carriage, received a shot which broke his arm. The baroness succeeded in getting to the house. Some women and crippled soldiers had already taken refuge there. It was mistaken for headquarters and cannonaded. The baroness retreated into the cellar, laid herself in a corner near the door

with her children's heads upon her knees, and passed a sleepless night of mental anguish.

In the morning the cannonade began anew. Cannon balls passed through the house repeatedly with a tremendous noise. A poor soldier, who was about to have a leg amputated, lost the other by one of these balls. The day was passed among such horrors. The wives of a major, a lieutenant, and a commissary, were her companions in misery. "They sat together," she says, "deploring their situation, when some one entered to announce bad news." There was whispering among her companions, with deep looks of sorrow. "I immediately suspected," says she, "that my husband had been killed. I shrieked aloud." She was soothed by assurances that nothing had happened to him; and was given to understand by a sidelong glance, that the wife of the lieutenant was the unfortunate one; her husband had been killed.

For six days, she and her children remained in this dismal place of refuge. The cellar was spacious, with three compartments, but the number of occupants increased. The wounded were brought in to be relieved—or to die. She remained with her children near the door, to escape more easily in case of fire. She put straw under mattresses; on these she lay with

her little ones, and her female servants slept near her.

Her frequent dread was, that the army might be driven off or march away, and she be left behind. "I crept up the staircase," says she, "more than once, and when I saw our soldiers near their watchfires, I became more calm, and could even have slept."

There was great distress for water. The river was near, but the Americans shot every one who approached it. A soldier's wife at length summoned resolution, and brought a supply. "The Americans," adds the baroness, "told us afterwards, that they spared her *on account of her sex*."

"I endeavored," continues she, "to dispel my melancholy, by constantly attending to the wounded. I made them tea and coffee, for which I received their warmest acknowledgments. I often shared my dinner with them."

Her husband visited her once or twice daily, at the risk of his life. On one occasion, General Phillips accompanied him, but was overcome when he saw the sufferings and danger by which this noble woman and her children were surrounded, and of which we have given a very subdued picture. "I would not for ten thousand guineas see this place again," ex-

claimed the general. "I am heart-broken with what I have seen."

Burgoyne was now reduced to despair. His forces were diminished by losses, by the desertion of Canadians and royalists, and the total defection of the Indians; and on inspection it was found that the provisions on hand, even upon short allowance, would not suffice for more than three days. A council of war, therefore, was called of all the generals, field-officers, and captains commanding troops. The deliberations were brief. All concurred in the necessity of opening a treaty with General Gates, for a surrender on honorable terms. While they were yet deliberating, an eighteen-pound ball passed through the tent, sweeping across the table round which they were seated.

Negotiations were accordingly opened on the 13th, under sanction of a flag. Lieutenant Kingston, Burgoyne's adjutant-general, was the bearer of a note, proposing a cessation of hostilities until terms could be adjusted.

The first terms offered by Gates were that the enemy should lay down their arms within their intrenchments and surrender themselves prisoners of war. These were indignantly rejected, with an intimation that, if persisted in, hostilities must recommence.

Counter-proposals were then made by Gen-

eral Burgoyne, and finally accepted by General Gates. According to these, the British troops were to march out of the camp with artillery and all the honors of war, to a fixed place, where they were to pile their arms at a word of command from their own officers. They were to be allowed a free passage to Europe upon condition of not serving again in America, during the present war. The army was not to be separated, especially the men from the officers; roll-calling and other regular duties were to be permitted; the officers were to be on parole, and to wear their side-arms. All private property to be sacred; no baggage to be searched or molested. All persons appertaining to or following the camp, whatever might be their country, were to be comprehended in these terms of capitulation.

Schuyler's late secretary, Colonel Varick, who was still in camp, writes to him on the 19th: "Burgoyne says he will send all his general officers at ten, in the morning, to finish and settle the business. This, I trust, will be accomplished before twelve, and then I shall have the honor and happiness of congratulating you on the glorious success of our arms. I wish to God I could say under your command.

"If you wish to see Burgoyne, you will be necessitated to see him here." *

In the night of the 16th, before the articles of capitulation had been signed, a British officer from the army below made his way into the camp, with despatches from Sir Henry Clinton, announcing that he had captured the forts in the Highlands, and had pushed detachments farther up the Hudson. Burgoyne now submitted to the consideration of his officers, "whether it was consistent with public faith, and if so, expedient, to suspend the execution of the treaty and trust to events." His own opinion inclined in the affirmative, but the majority of the council determined that the public faith was fully plighted. The capitulation was accordingly signed by Burgoyne on the 17th of October.

The British army, at the time of the surrender, was reduced by capture, death, and desertion, from nine thousand to five thousand seven hundred and fifty-two men. That of Gates, regulars and militia, amounted to ten thousand five hundred and fifty-four men on duty; between two and three thousand being on the sick list, or absent on furlough.

By this capitulation, the Americans gained a fine train of artillery, seven thousand stand

* Schuyler's *Papers*.

of arms, and a great quantity of clothing, tents, and military stores of all kinds.

When the British troops marched forth to deposit their arms at the appointed place, Colonel Wilkinson, the adjutant-general, was the only American soldier to be seen. Gates had ordered his troops to keep rigidly within their lines, that they might not add by their presence to the humiliation of a brave enemy. In fact, throughout all his conduct, during the campaign, British writers, and Burgoyne himself, give him credit for acting with great humanity and forbearance.*

Wilkinson, in his memoirs, describes the first meeting of Gates and Burgoyne, which took place at the head of the American camp. They were attended by their staffs and by other general officers. Burgoyne was in a rich royal uniform. Gates in a plain blue frock. When they had approached nearly within sword's length they reined up and halted. Burgoyne, raising his hat most gracefully, said: "The fortune of war, General Gates, has made me

* "At the very time," say the British historians, "that General Burgoyne was receiving the most favorable conditions for himself and his ruined army, the fine village or town of Esopus, at no very great distance, was reduced to ashes, and not a house left standing."

your prisoner ; " to which the other, returning his salute, replied, " I shall always be ready to testify that it has not been through any fault of your Excellency."

" We passed through the American camp," writes the already cited Hessian officer, " in which all the regiments were drawn out beside the artillery, and stood under arms. Not one of them was uniformly clad ; each had on the clothes which he wore in the fields, the church, or the tavern. They stood, however, like soldiers, well arranged, and with a military air, in which there was but little to find fault with. All the muskets had bayonets, and the sharpshooters had rifles. The men all stood so still that we were filled with wonder. Not one of them made a single motion as if he would speak with his neighbor. Nay more, all the lads that stood there in rank and file, kind nature had formed so trim, so slender, so nervous, that it was a pleasure to look at them, and we all were surprised at the sight of such a handsome, well-formed race.* In all earnestness," adds he, " English America surpasses the most of Europe in the growth and looks of its male population. The whole nation has a natural turn and talent for war and a soldier's life."

* *Briefe aus Neu England.* Schlözer's *Briefwechsel.*

He made himself somewhat merry, however, with the equipments of the officers. A few wore regimentals; and those fashioned to their own notions as to cut and color, being provided by themselves. Brown coats with sea-green facings, white linings and silver trimmings, and gray coats in abundance, with buff facings and cuffs, and gilt buttons; in short, every variety of pattern.

The brigadiers and generals wore uniforms and belts which designated their rank; but most of the colonels and other officers were in their ordinary clothes; a musket and bayonet in hand, and a cartridge-box or powder-horn over the shoulder. But what especially amused him was the variety of uncouth wigs worn by the officers, the lingerings of an uncouth fashion.

Most of the troops thus noticed were the hastily levied militia, the yeomanry of the country. "There were regular regiments also," he said, "which, for want of time and cloth, were not yet equipped in uniform. These had standards with various emblems and mottoes, some of which had for us a very satirical signification.

"But I must say, to the credit of the enemy's regiments," continues he, "that not a man was to be found therein who, as we marched by,

made even a sign of taunting, insulting exultation, hatred, or any other evil feeling; on the contrary, they seemed as though they would rather do us honor. As we marched by the great tent of General Gates, he invited in the brigadiers and commanders of regiments, and various refreshments were set before them. Gates is between fifty and sixty years of age; wears his own thin gray hair; is active and friendly, and, on account of the weakness of his eyes, constantly wears spectacles. At headquarters we met many officers, who treated us with all possible politeness."

We now give another page of the Baroness De Riedesel's fortunes, at this time of the surrender. "My husband's groom brought me a message to join him with the children. I once more seated myself in my dear calash, and while riding through the American camp was gratified to observe that nobody looked at us with disrespect, but, on the contrary, greeted us, and seemed touched at the sight of a captive mother with her children. I must candidly confess that I did not present myself, though so situated, with much courage to the enemy, for the thing was entirely new to me. When I drew near the tents, a good-looking man advanced towards me, and helping the children from the calash, kissed and caressed them: he

then offered me his arm, and tears trembled in his eyes. 'You tremble,' said he; 'do not be alarmed, I pray you.' 'Sir,' cried I, 'a countenance so expressive of benevolence, and the kindness you have evinced towards my children, are sufficient to dispel all apprehensions.' He then ushered me into the tent of General Gates, whom I found engaged in friendly conversation with Generals Burgoyne and Phillips. General Burgoyne said to me, 'You can now be quiet, and free from all apprehension of danger.' I replied that I should indeed be reprehensible, if I felt any anxiety, when our general felt none, and was on such friendly terms with General Gates.

"All the generals remained to dine with General Gates. The gentleman who had received me with so much kindness, came and said to me, 'You may find it embarrassing to be the only lady in such a large company of gentlemen; will you come with your children to my tent, and partake of a frugal dinner, offered with the best will?' 'By the kindness you show to me,' returned I, 'you induce me to believe that you have a wife and children.' He informed me that he was General Schuyler. He regaled me with smoked tongues, which were excellent, with beefsteaks, potatoes, fresh butter and bread. Never did a dinner give me

more pleasure than this, and I read the same happy change on the countenances of all those around me. That my husband was out of danger, was a still greater joy. After dinner, General Schuyler begged me to pay him a visit at his house at Albany, where he expected that General Burgoyne would also be his guest. I sent to ask my husband's directions, who advised me to accept the invitation." The reception which she met with at Albany, from General Schuyler's wife and daughters, was not, she said, like the reception of enemies, but of the most intimate friends. "They loaded us with kindness," writes she, "and they behaved in the same manner towards General Burgoyne, though he had ordered their splendid establishment to be burnt, and without any necessity, it was said. But all their actions proved, that in the sight of the misfortunes of others they quickly forgot their own." It was, in fact, the lot of Burgoyne to have coals of fire heaped on his head by those with whom he had been at enmity. One of the first persons whom he had encountered in the American camp was General Schuyler. He attempted to make some explanation or excuse about the recent destruction of his property. Schuyler begged him not to think of it, as the occasion justified it, according to the principles and rules of war.

"He did more," said Burgoyne, in a speech before the House of Commons, "he sent an aide-de-camp to conduct me to Albany; in order, as he expressed it, to procure better quarters than a stranger might be able to find. That gentleman conducted me to a very elegant house, and, to my great surprise, presented me to Mrs. Schuyler and her family. In that house I remained during my whole stay in Albany, with a table of more than twenty covers for me and my friends, and every other demonstration of hospitality."

This was indeed realizing the vaunted courtesy and magnanimity of the age of chivalry.

The surrender of Burgoyne was soon followed by the evacuation of Ticonderoga and Fort Independence, the garrisons retiring to the Isle aux Noix and St. John's. As to the armament on the Hudson, the commanders whom Sir Henry Clinton had left in charge of it, received, in the midst of their desolating career, the astounding intelligence of the capture of the army with which they had come to cooperate. Nothing remained for them, therefore, but to drop down the river and return to New York.

The whole expedition, though it had effected much damage to the Americans, failed to be of essential service to the royal cause. The

fortresses in the Highlands could not be maintained, and had been evacuated and destroyed, and the plundering and burning of defenseless towns and villages, and especially the conflagration of Esopus, had given to the whole enterprise the character of a maraud, disgraceful in civilized warfare, and calculated only to inflame more deadly enmity and determined opposition.

NOTE.

The reader may desire to know the sequel of Lady Harriet Ackland's romantic story. Her husband recovered from his wounds, and they returned together to England. Major Ackland retained a grateful sense of the kind treatment they had experienced from the Americans. At a dinner party he had warm words with another British officer, who questioned the American character for courage. A duel ensued, in which the major was killed. The shock to Lady Harriet produced mental derangement. She recovered in the course of a couple of years, and ultimately was married to Mr. Brudenell, the worthy chaplain who had been her companion and protector in the time of her distress.

Chapter XXVII.

Washington Advances to Skippack Creek—The British Fleet in the Delaware—Forts and Obstructions in the River—Washington Meditates an Attack on the British Camp—Battle of Germantown.

HAVING given the catastrophe of the British invasion from the North, we will revert to that part of the year's campaign which was passing under the immediate eye of Washington. We left him encamped at Pott's Grove towards the end of September, giving his troops a few days' repose after their severe fatigues. Being rejoined by Wayne and Smallwood with their brigades, and other troops being arrived from the Jerseys, his force amounted to about eight thousand Continentals and three thousand militia; with these he advanced, on the 30th of September, to Skippack Creek, about fourteen miles from Germantown, where the main body of the British army lay encamped, a detachment under Cornwallis occupying Philadelphia.

Immediately after the battle of Brandywine, Admiral Lord Howe with great exertions had succeeded in getting his ships of war and transports round from the Chesapeake into the Delaware and had anchored them along the western shore from Reedy Island to Newcastle. They were prevented from approaching nearer by obstructions which the Americans had placed in the river. The lowest of these were at Billingsport (or Bylling's Point), where chevaux-de-frise in the channel of the river were protected by a strong redoubt on the Jersey shore. Higher up were Fort Mifflin on Mud (or Fort) Island, and Fort Mercer on the Jersey shore; with chevaux-de-frise between them. Washington had exerted himself to throw a garrison into Fort Mifflin, and keep up the obstructions of the river. "If these can be maintained," said he, "General Howe's situation will not be the most agreeable; for if his supplies can be stopped by water, it may easily be done by land. To do both shall be my utmost endeavor; and I am not without hope that the acquisition of Philadelphia may, instead of his good fortune, prove his ruin." *

Sir William Howe was perfectly aware of this, and had concerted operations with his brother by land and water, to reduce the forts

* Letter to the President of Congress. Sparks, v., 71.

and clear away the obstructions of the river. With this view he detached a part of his force into the Jerseys, to proceed, in the first instance, against the fortifications at Billingsport.

Washington had been for some days anxiously on the lookout for some opportunity to strike a blow of consequence, when two intercepted letters gave him intelligence of this movement. He immediately determined to make an attack upon the British camp at Germantown, while weakened by the absence of this detachment. To understand the plan of the attack, some description of the British place of encampment is necessary.

Germantown, at that time, was little more than one continued street, extending two miles north and south. The houses were mostly of stone, low and substantial, with steep roofs and projecting eaves. They stood apart from each other, with fruit trees in front and small gardens. Beyond the village, and about a hundred yards east of the road, stood a spacious stone edifice, with ornamented grounds, statues, groves, and shrubbery, the country-seat of Benjamin Chew, chief justice of Pennsylvania previous to the Revolution: we shall have more to say concerning this mansion presently.

Four roads approached the village from above; that is, from the north. The Skip-

pack, which was the main road, led over Chestnut Hill and Mount Airy down to and through the village toward Philadelphia, forming the street of which we have just spoken. On its right, and nearly parallel, was the Monatawny or Ridge road, passing near the Schuylkill, and entering the main road below the village.

On the left of the Skippack or main road, was the Limekiln road, running nearly parallel to it for a time, and then turning towards it, almost at right angles, so as to enter the village at the market-place. Still farther to the left or east, and outside of all, was the Old York road, falling into the main road some distance below the village.

The main body of the British forces lay encamped across the lower part of the village, divided into almost equal parts by the main street or Skippack road. The right wing, commanded by General Grant, was to the east of the road, the left wing to the west. Each wing was covered by strong detachments, and guarded by cavalry. General Howe had his headquarters in the rear.

The advance of the army, composed of the 2d battalion of British light infantry, with a train of artillery, was more than two miles from the main body, on the west of the road,

with an outlying picket stationed with two six-pounders at Allen's house on Mount Airy. About three quarters of a mile in the rear of the light infantry, lay encamped in a field opposite "Chew's House," the 40th regiment of infantry, under Colonel Musgrave.

According to Washington's plan for the attack, Sullivan was to command the right wing, composed of his own division, principally Maryland troops, and the division of General Wayne. He was to be sustained by a *corps de reserve*, under Lord Stirling, composed of Nash's North Carolina and Maxwell's Virginia brigades, and to be flanked by the brigade of General Conway. He was to march down the Skippack road and attack the left wing; at the same time General Armstrong, with the Pennsylvania militia, was to pass down the Monatawny or Ridge road, and get upon the enemy's left and rear.

Greene with the left wing, composed of his own division and the division of General Stephen, and flanked by McDougall's brigade, was to march down the Limekiln road, so as to enter the village at the market-house. The two divisions were to attack the enemy's right wing in front, McDougall with his brigade to attack it in flank, while Smallwood's division of Maryland militia and Forman's Jersey bri-

gade, making a circuit by the Old York road, were to attack it in the rear. Two thirds of the forces were thus directed against the enemy's right wing, under the idea that, if it could be forced, the whole army must be pushed into the Schuylkill, or compelled to surrender. The attack was to begin on all quarters at daybreak.*

About dusk, on the 3d of October, the army left its encampment at Matuchen Hills, by its different routes. Washington accompanied the right wing. It had fifteen miles of weary march to make over rough roads, so that it was after daybreak when the troops emerged from the woods on Chestnut Hill. The morning was dark with a heavy fog. A detachment advanced to attack the enemy's out-picket, stationed at Allen's house. The patrol was led by Captain Allen McLane, a brave Maryland officer, well acquainted with the ground, and with the position of the enemy. He fell in with double sentries, whom he killed with the loss of one man. The alarm, however, was given; the distant roll of a drum and the call to arms, resounded through the murky air. The picket guard,

* Letter of Washington to the President of Congress. Letter of Sullivan to the President of New Hampshire.

after discharging their two six-pounders, were routed, and retreated down the south side of Mount Airy to the battalion of light infantry who were forming in order of battle. As their pursuers descended into the valley, the sun rose, but was soon obscured. Wayne led the attack upon the light infantry. "They broke at first," writes he, "without waiting to receive us, but soon formed again, when a heavy and well-directed fire took place on both sides."

They again gave way, but being supported by the grenadiers, returned to the charge. Sullivan's division and Conway's brigade formed on the west of the road, and joined in the attack; the rest of the troops were too far to the north to render any assistance. The infantry, after fighting bravely for a time, broke and ran, leaving their artillery behind. They were hotly pursued by Wayne. His troops remembered the bloody 20th of September, and the ruthless slaughter of their comrades. "They pushed on with the bayonet," says Wayne, "and took ample vengeance for that night's work." The officers endeavored to restrain their fury towards those who cried for mercy, but to little purpose. It was a terrible mêlée. The fog, together with the smoke of the cannonry and musketry, made it almost as dark as night; our people mistaking one an-

other for the enemy frequently exchanged shots before they discovered their error. The whole of the enemy's advance were driven from their camping ground, leaving their tents standing, with all their baggage. Colonel Musgrave, with six companies of the 40th regiment, threw himself into Chew's House, barricaded the doors and lower windows, and took post above stairs; the main torrent of the retreat passed by, pursued by Wayne into the village.

As the residue of this division of the army came up to join in the pursuit, Musgrave and his men opened a fire of musketry upon them from the upper windows of his citadel. This brought them to a halt. Some of the officers were for pushing on; but General Knox stoutly objected, insisting on the old military maxim, never to leave a garrisoned castle in the rear.

His objection unluckily prevailed. A flag was sent with a summons to surrender. A young Virginian, Lieutenant Smith, volunteered to be the bearer. As he was advancing, he was fired upon and received a mortal wound. This house was now cannonaded, but the artillery was too light to have the desired effect. An attempt was made to set fire to the basement. He who attempted it was shot dead

from a grated cellar window. Half an hour was thus spent in vain ; scarce any of the defenders of the house were injured, though many of the assailants were slain. At length a regiment was left to keep guard upon the mansion and hold its garrison in check, and the rear division again pressed forward.

This half hour's delay, however, of one half of the army, disconcerted the action. The divisions and brigades thus separated from each other by the skirmishing attack upon Chew's House, could not be reunited. The fog and smoke rendered all objects indistinct at thirty yards' distance ; the different parts of the army knew nothing of the position or movements of each other, and the commander-in-chief could take no view nor gain any information of the situation of the whole. The original plan of attack was only effectively carried into operation in the centre. The flanks and rear of the enemy were nearly unmolested ; still the action, though disconnected, irregular, and partial, was animated in various quarters. Sullivan, being reinforced by Nash's North Carolina troops and Conway's brigade, pushed on a mile beyond Chew's House, where the left wing of the enemy gave way before him.

Greene and Stephen, with their divisions,

having had to make a circuit, were late in coming into action, and became separated from each other, part of Stephen's division being arrested by a heavy fire from Chew's House and pausing to return it; Greene, however, with his division, comprising the brigades of Muhlenberg and Scott, pressed rapidly forward, drove an advance regiment of light infantry before him, took a number of prisoners, and made his way quite to the market-house in the centre of the village, where he encountered the right wing of the British drawn up to receive him. The impetuosity of his attack had an evident effect upon the enemy, who began to waver. Forman and Smallwood, with the Jersey and Maryland militia, were just showing themselves on the right flank of the enemy, and our troops seemed on the point of carrying the whole encampment. At this moment a singular panic seized our army. Various causes are assigned for it. Sullivan alleges that his troops had expended all their cartridges, and were alarmed by seeing the enemy gathering on their left, and by the cry of a light horseman, that the enemy were getting round them. Wayne's division, which had pushed the enemy three miles, was alarmed by the approach of a large body of American troops on its left flank, which it mistook for

foes, and fell back in defiance of every effort of its officers to rally it. In its retreat it came upon Stephen's division and threw it into a panic, being, in its turn, mistaken for the enemy; thus all fell into confusion, and our army fled from their own victory.

In the meantime, the enemy having recovered from the first effects of the surprise, advanced in their turn. General Grey brought up the left wing, and pressed upon the American troops as they receded. Lord Cornwallis, with a squadron of light horse from Philadelphia, arrived just in time to join in the pursuit.

The retreat of the Americans was attended with less loss than might have been expected, and they carried off all their cannon and wounded. This was partly owing to the good generalship of Greene, in keeping up a retreating fight with the enemy for nearly five miles: and partly to a check given by Wayne, who turned his cannon upon the enemy from an eminence, near White Marsh Church, and brought them to a stand. The retreat continued through the day to Perkiomen Creek, a distance of twenty miles.

The loss of the enemy in this action is stated by them to be seventy-one killed, four hundred and fifteen wounded, and fourteen missing: among the killed was Brigadier-General Agnew.

The American loss was one hundred and fifty killed, five hundred and twenty-one wounded, and about four hundred taken prisoners. Among the killed was General Nash of North Carolina. Among the prisoners was Colonel Matthews of Virginia, who commanded a Virginia regiment in the left wing. Most of his officers and men were killed or wounded in fighting bravely near the market-house, and he himself received several bayonet wounds.

Speaking of Washington's conduct amidst the perplexities of this confused battle, General Sullivan writes, "I saw, with great concern, our brave commander-in-chief exposing himself to the hottest fire of the enemy, in such a manner, that regard for my country obliged me to ride to him, and beg him to retire. He, to gratify me and some others, withdrew to a small distance, but his anxiety for the fate of the day soon brought him up again, where he remained till our troops had retreated."

The sudden retreat of the army gave him surprise, chagrin, and mortification. "Every account," said he, subsequently, in a letter to the President of Congress, "confirms the opinion I at first entertained, that our troops retreated at the instant when victory was declaring herself in our favor. The tumult, disorder, and even despair, which, it seems, had taken

place in the British army, were scarcely to be paralleled; and, it is said, so strongly did the ideas of a retreat prevail, that Chester was fixed on for their rendezvous. I can discover no other cause for not improving this happy opportunity, than the extreme haziness of the weather."

So also Captain Heth of Virginia, who was in the action: "What makes this inglorious flight more grating to us is, that we know the enemy had orders to retreat, and rendezvous at Chester; and that upwards of two thousand Hessians had actually crossed the Schuylkill for that purpose; that the tories were in the utmost distress, and moving out of the city; that our friends confined in the new jail made it ring with shouts of joy; that we passed, in pursuing them, upwards of twenty pieces of cannon, their tents standing filled with their choicest baggage; in fine, everything was as we could wish, when the above flight took place." *

No one was more annoyed than Wayne. "Fortune smiled on us for full three hours," writes he, "the enemy were broke, dispersed, and flying in all quarters—we were in possession of their whole encampment, together with

* Letter to Col. Lamb in the *Lamb Papers*, N. Y. Hist. Soc., and quoted in the *Life of Lamb*, p. 183.

their artillery park, etc., etc. A *wind-mill* attack was made upon a house into which six light companies had thrown themselves, to avoid our bayonets. Our troops were deceived by this attack, thinking it something formidable. They fell back to assist,—the enemy believing it to be a retreat, followed,—confusion ensued, and we ran away from the arms of victory open to receive us."

In fact, as has justly been observed by an experienced officer, the plan of attack was too widely extended for strict concert, and too complicated for precise co-operation, as it had to be conducted in the night, and with a large proportion of undisciplined militia ; and yet, a bewildering fog alone appears to have prevented its complete success.

But although the Americans were balked of the victory, which seemed within their grasp, the impression made by the audacity of this attempt upon Germantown, was greater, we are told, than that caused by any single incident of the war after Lexington and Bunker's Hill.*

A British military historian, a contemporary, observes : " In this action the Americans acted upon the offensive ; and though repulsed with loss, showed themselves a formidable adver-

* Reed's *Memoirs*, vol. i., p. 319.

sary, capable of charging with resolution and retreating with good order. The hope, therefore, entertained from the effect of any action with them as decisive, and likely to put a speedy termination to the war, was exceedingly abated." *

The battle had its effect also in France. The Count De Vergennes observed to the American commissioners in Paris on their first interview, that nothing struck him so much as General Washington's attacking and giving battle to General Howe's army; that to bring an army raised within a year to this pass promised everything.

The effect on the army itself may be judged from letters written at the time by officers to their friends. "Though we gave away a complete victory," writes one, "we have learned this valuable truth, that we are able to beat them by vigorous exertion, and that we are far superior in point of swiftness. We are in high spirits; every action gives our troops fresh vigor, and a greater opinion of their own strength. Another bout or two must make the situation of the enemy very disagreeable." †

Another writes to his father: "For my own

* *Civil War in America*, i., 269.

† Capt. Heth to Col. Lamb.

part, I am so fully convinced of the justice of the cause in which we are contending, and that Providence, in its own good time, will succeed and bless it, that, were I to see twelve of the United States overrun by our cruel invaders, I should still believe the thirteenth would not only save itself, but also work out the deliverence of the others." *

* Major Shaw. *Memoirs*, by Josiah Quincy, p. 41.

Chapter XXVII.

Washington at White Marsh—Measures to Cut off the Enemy's Supplies—The Forts on the Delaware Reinforced—Colonel Green of Rhode Island at Fort Mercer—Attack and Defense of that Fort—Death of Count Donop.

WASHINGTON remained a few days at Perkiomen Creek, to give his army time to rest, and recover from the disorder incident to a retreat. Having been reinforced by the arrival of twelve hundred Rhode Island troops from Peekskill, under General Varnum, and nearly a thousand Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania troops, he gradually drew nearer to Philadelphia, and took a strong position at White Marsh, within fourteen miles of that city. By a resolution of Congress, all persons taken within thirty miles of any place occupied by British troops, in the act of conveying supplies to them, were subjected to martial law. Acting under the resolution, Washing-

ton detached large bodies of militia to scour the roads above the city, and between the Schuylkill and Chester, to intercept all supplies going to the enemy.

On the forts and obstructions in the river, Washington mainly counted to complete the harassment of Philadelphia. These defenses had been materially impaired. The works at Billingsport had been attacked and destroyed, and some of the enemy's ships had forced their way through the chevaux-de-frise placed there. The American frigate *Delaware*, stationed in the river between the upper forts and Philadelphia, had run aground before a British battery, and been captured.

It was now the great object of the Howes to reduce and destroy, and of Washington to defend and maintain the remaining forts and obstructions. Fort Mifflin, which we have already mentioned, was erected on a low, green, reedy island in the Delaware, a few miles below Philadelphia, and below the mouth of the Schuylkill. It consisted of a strong redoubt, with extensive outworks and batteries. There was but a narrow channel between the island and the Pennsylvanian shore. The main channel, practicable for ships, was on the other side. In this were sunk strong chevaux-de-frise, difficult either to be weighed

or cut through, and dangerous to any ships that might run against them; subjected as they would be to the batteries of Fort Mifflin on one side, and on the other to those of Fort Mercer, a strong work at Red Bank on the Jersey shore.

Fort Mifflin was garrisoned by troops of the Maryland line, under Lieutenant-Colonel Samuel Smith of Baltimore; and had kept up a brave defense against batteries erected by the enemy on the Pennsylvania shore. A reinforcement of Virginia troops made the garrison between three and four hundred strong.

Floating batteries, galleys, and fire-ships commanded by Commodore Hazelwood, were stationed under the forts and about the river.

Fort Mercer had hitherto been garrisoned by militia, but Washington now replaced them by four hundred of General Varnum's Rhode Island Continentals. Colonel Christopher Greene was put in command; a brave officer who had accompanied Arnold in his rough expedition to Canada, and fought valiantly under the walls of Quebec. "The post with which you are intrusted," writes Washington in his letter of instructions, "is of the utmost importance to America. The whole defense of the Delaware depends upon it; and consequently all the enemy's hopes of keeping

Philadelphia, and finally succeeding in the present campaign."

Colonel Greene was accompanied by Captain Mauduit Duplessis, who was to have the direction of the artillery. He was a young French engineer of great merit, who had volunteered in the American cause, and received a commission from Congress. The chevaux-de-frise in the river had been constructed under his superintendence.

Greene, aided by Duplessis, made all haste to put Fort Mercer in a state of defense; but before the outworks were completed, he was surprised (October 22d) by the appearance of a large force emerging from a wood within cannon-shot of the fort. Their uniforms showed them to be Hessians. They were, in fact, four battalions, twelve hundred strong, of grenadiers, picked men, beside light infantry and chasseurs, all commanded by Count Donop, who had figured in the last year's campaign.

Colonel Greene, in nowise dismayed by the superiority of the enemy, forming in glistening array before the wood, prepared for a stout resistance. In a little while an officer was descried, riding slowly up with a flag, accompanied by a drummer. Greene ordered his men to keep out of sight, that the fort might appear but slightly garrisoned.

When within proper distance, the drummer sounded a parley and the officer summoned the garrison to surrender; with a threat of no quarter in case of resistance.

Greene's reply was, that the post would be defended to the last extremity.

The flag rode back and made report. Forthwith the Hessians were seen at work throwing up a battery within half a mile of the outworks. It was finished by four o'clock, and opened a heavy cannonade, under cover of which the enemy were preparing to approach.

As the American outworks were but half finished, and were too extensive to be manned by the garrison, it was determined by Greene and Duplessis that the troops should make but a short stand there; to gall the enemy in their approach, and then retire within the redoubt, which was defended by a deep intrenchment, boarded and fraised.

Donop led on his troops in gallant style, under cover of a heavy fire from his battery. They advanced in two columns, to attack the outworks in two places. As they advanced, they were excessively galled by a flanking fire from the American galleys and batteries, and by sharp volleys from the outworks. The latter, however, as had been concerted, were quickly abandoned by the garrison. The

enemy entered at two places, and, imagining the day their own, the two columns pushed on with shouts to storm different parts of the redoubt. As yet, no troops were to be seen; but as one of the columns approached the redoubt on the north side, a tremendous discharge of grape-shot and musketry burst forth from the embrasures in front, and a half-masked battery on the left. The slaughter was prodigious; the column was driven back in confusion. Count Donop, with the other column, in attempting the south side of the redoubt, had passed the abatis; some of his men had traversed the fosse; others had clambered over the pickets, when a similar tempest of artillery and musketry burst upon them. Some were killed on the spot, many were wounded, and the rest were driven out. Donop himself was wounded, and remained on the spot; Lieutenant-Colonel Mingerode, the second in command, was also dangerously wounded. Several other of the best officers were slain or disabled.

Lieutenant-Colonel Linsing, the oldest remaining officer, endeavored to draw off the troops in good order, but in vain; they retreated in confusion, hotly pursued, and were again cut up in their retreat by the flanking fire from the galleys and floating batteries.

The loss of the enemy in killed and wounded,

in this brief but severe action, was about four hundred men. That the Americans, eight killed and twenty-nine wounded.

As Captain Mauduit Duplessis was traversing the scene of slaughter after the repulse, he was accosted by a voice from among the slain: "Whoever you are, draw me hence." It was the unfortunate Count Donop. Duplessis had him conveyed to a house near the fort, where every attention was paid to his comfort. He lanquished for three days, during which Duplessis was continually at his bedside. "This is finishing a noble career early," said the count sadly, as he found his death approaching,—then, as if conscious of the degrading service in which he had fallen, hired out by his prince to aid a foreign power in quelling the brave struggle of a people for their liberty, and contrasting it with that in which the chivalrous youth by his bedside was engaged,—"I die," added he bitterly, "the victim of my ambition, and of the avarice of my sovereign."* He was but thirty-seven years of age at the time of his death.

According to the plan of the enemy, Fort Mifflin, opposite to Fort Mercer, was to have been attacked at the same time by water. The force employed was the *Augusta* of sixty-four

*De Chastellux, vol. i., p. 266.

guns, the *Roebuck* of forty-four, two frigates, the *Merlin* sloop of eighteen guns, and a galley. They forced their way through the lower line of chevaux-de-frise; but the *Augusta* and *Merlin* ran aground below the second line, and every effort to get them off proved fruitless. To divert attention from their situation, the other vessels drew as near to Fort Mifflin as they could, and opened a cannonade; but the obstructions in the river had so altered the channel that they could not get within very effective distance. They kept up a fire upon the fort throughout the evening, and recommenced it early in the morning, as did likewise the British batteries on the Pennsylvania shore; hoping that under cover of it the ships might be got off. A strong adverse wind, however, kept the tide from rising sufficiently to float them.

The Americans discovered their situation, and sent down four fire-ships to destroy them, but without effect. A heavy fire was now opened upon them from the galleys and floating batteries. It was warmly returned. In the course of the action, a red-hot shot set the *Augusta* on fire. It was impossible to check the flames. All haste was made with boats to save the crew, while the other ships drew off as fast as possible to get out of reach of the

explosion. She blew up, however, while the second lieutenant, the chaplain, the gunner, and several of the crew were yet on board, most of whom perished. The *Merlin* was now set on fire and abandoned; the *Roebuck* and the other vessels dropped down the river, and the attack on Fort Mifflin was given up.

These signal repulses of the enemy had an animating effect on the public mind, and were promptly noticed by Congress. Colonel Greene, who commanded at Fort Mercer, Lieutenant-Colonel Smith of Maryland, who commanded at Fort Mifflin, and Commodore Hazelwood, who commanded the galleys, received the thanks of that body; and subsequently, a sword was voted to each, as a testimonial of distinguished merit.

END OF VOLUME IV.

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